

**PUBLIC RELATIONS  
IN THE  
LOCAL COMMUNITY**

THE AMERICAN SERIES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS BOOKS

Rex F. Harlow, *Editor*



# Public Relations in the Local Community

by

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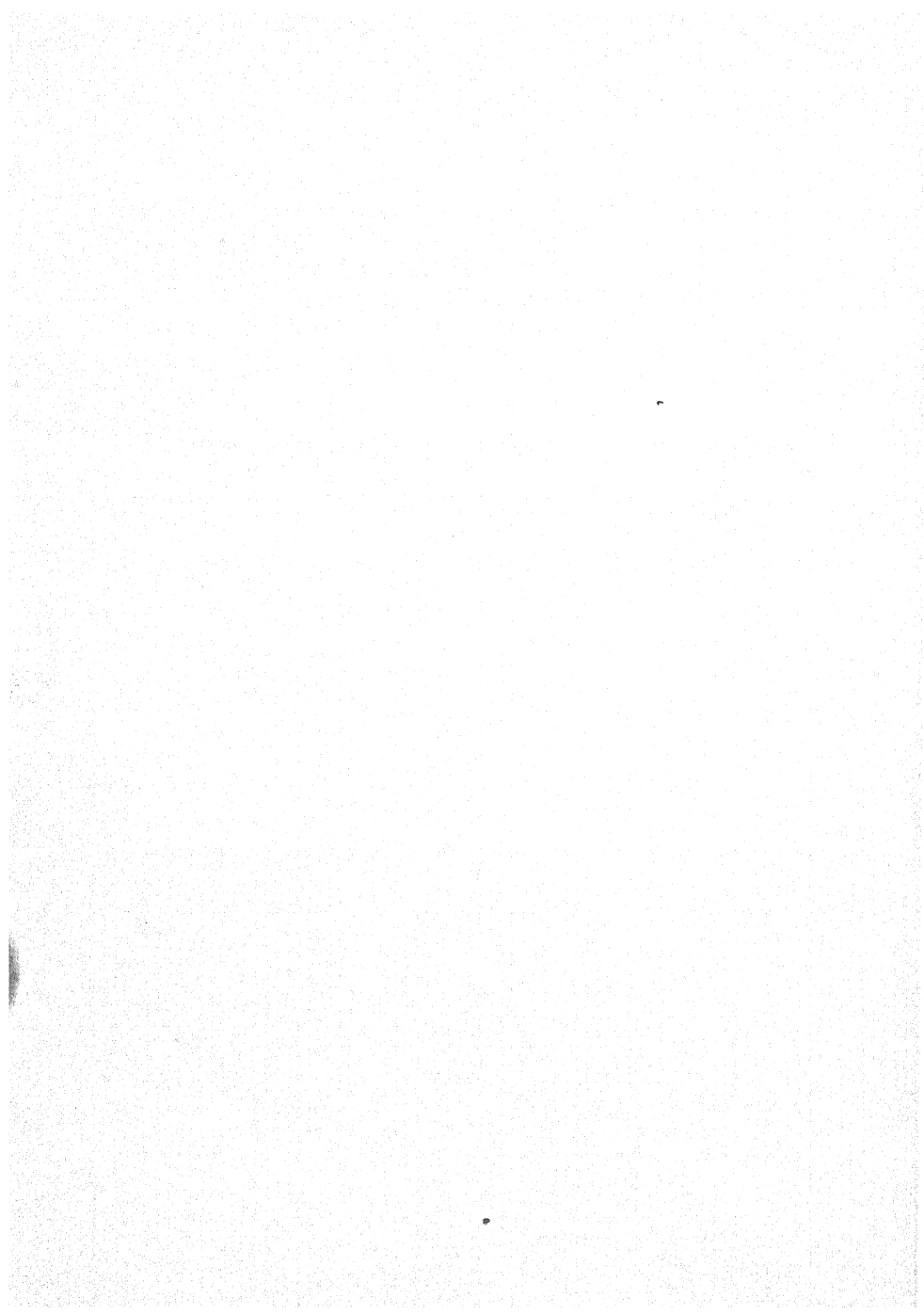
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## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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*To the B. W. L.'s*

*—both of them*



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## Preface

In the growing literature of public relations, the earlier books dealt with the need for improved relations and with the philosophy that should guide them. Then followed writings on the tools and techniques of public relations, with special emphasis on publicity techniques.

Later, as the field became better defined, it began to be subdivided. Books appeared on relations with one or another segment of the public: stockholder relations, for example, and government relations, and books on the public relations of this or that industry or profession.

In that process of breaking the field down into its elements, it became clear that the local community was one of the segments—one of the “publics”—into which the public can be subdivided; and that it was at the same time a reproduction of the entire public in miniature. A more complete understanding of public relations, therefore, called for an understanding of this community and of what is involved in maintaining good community relations. To supply that understanding is the intent of this book.

It is the thesis of this book that business firms will profit by maintaining continuously harmonious relations with the communities in which they operate and by contributing positively to the welfare of those communities. Hence business firms are talked about primarily. Most of the suggestions are addressed to business firms, and the supporting case histories are drawn largely from the business field. Yet other, noncommercial institutions should find

profit in the suggestions and find parallels to their own experience in the examples of good and bad practices.

The book is in two parts—a “why” part and a “how” part. The first part deals with the reasons why the local community is important to the business firm, and the ways in which the firm will profit by being a good citizen and a good neighbor. The second part tells how a firm may proceed to become a good citizen and good neighbor in the community.

The problem of community relations for business firms has become more acute as companies have spread across the country. With branch plants, branch warehouses, and sales offices scattered from city to city, the problem becomes complex and important. As the temptation to neglect community relations increases, the price of neglect goes up. It is harder for the absentee-owned branch plant to fit itself into a local community; but such a plant is much more vulnerable to the penalties of failing to fit in.

The special problems of the branch plant and office are here given particular attention. Yet the principles and the suggestions outlined apply, in one degree or another, to firms of every size and kind. The single-unit company operating entirely within a single community and the national corporation with a branch there have many different problems in relation to that community; but they both have the same necessity of proving themselves to be good citizens and neighbors, and they both must do many of the same kinds of things in order to prove themselves such.

Community-relations problems are not limited to the branch plant. The fact of being a branch plant or office only emphasizes the factor of remoteness; and remoteness is a matter of degree. Some locally owned businesses hold themselves more aloof and remote from their communities—hence have worse community relations—than many branches do. So, while the special problems of the branch operation are examined in one chapter of this book, the other chapters apply equally to any form of ownership or operation.



Some practitioners of good community relations have reduced the problem to simple terms by saying, "Good community relations are just a matter of being a good citizen and a good neighbor." That is right. This book might well have been titled *How to Be a Good Citizen and a Good Neighbor in the Local Community*. But a corporation, which is a legal person, is also a complex person; and to make him a good citizen and neighbor is sometimes a complex undertaking.

The preparation of such a book as this, with its case histories and other factual material, calls for many kinds of help. To all those who have given that help, the author is deeply grateful.

Corporation executives, public relations counsellors, community workers and association officers in every section of the country have been most generous in making available materials and in discussing policies related to the subject of this book. The permission of editors and publishers to quote from their publications is greatly appreciated.

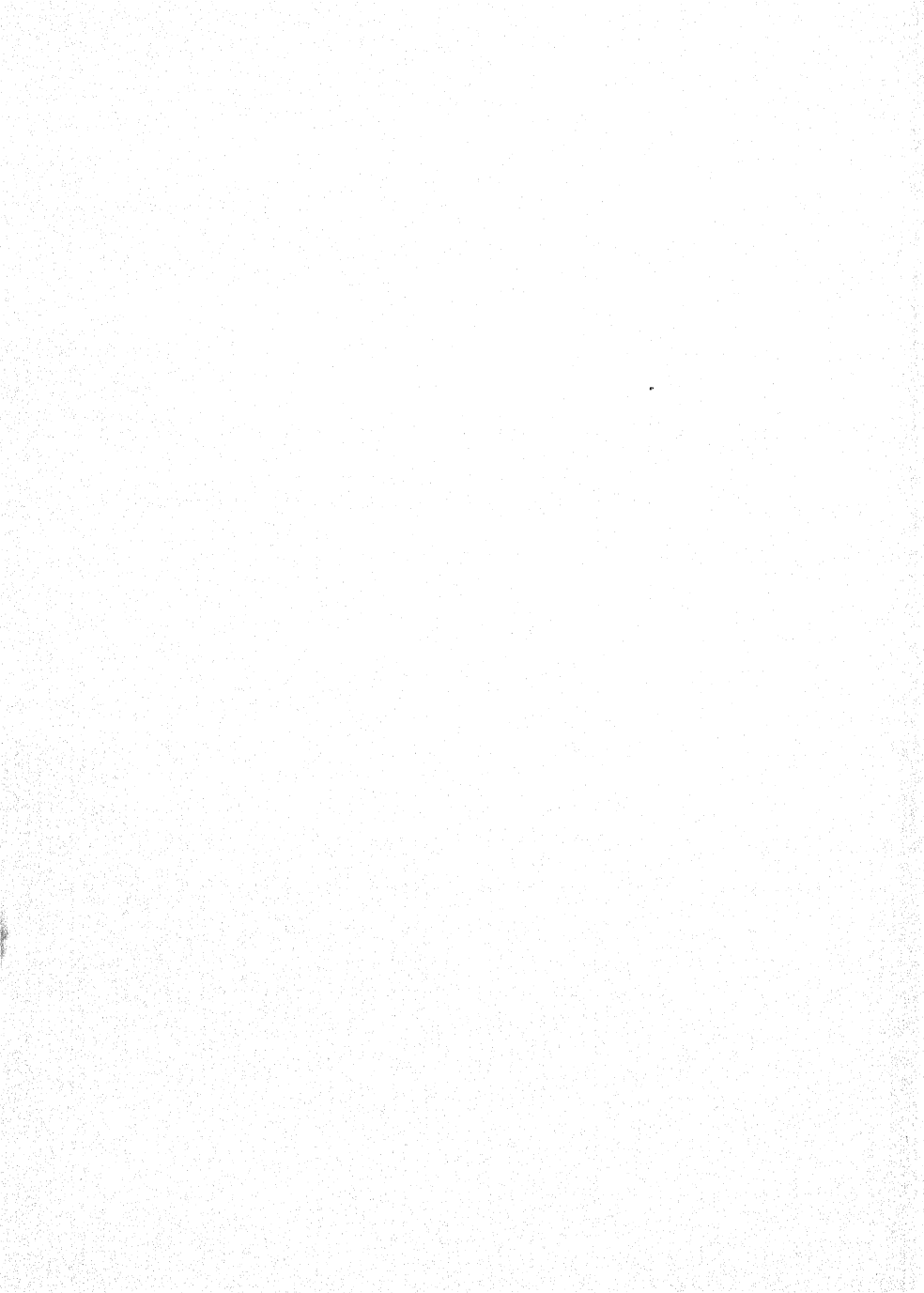
To Will Williams, Jr., the author is indebted for helpful counsel at many stages in the development of the book; and to Miss Charlotte Hoff for her assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

L.B.L.



PART ONE

THE PROBLEM



# 1.

## *Why Is the Community Important?*

WHILE business woos a phantom public whose size and shape it can't see, it may be neglecting a public so real it can be seen and touched.

While business views with alarm the social, economic, and political doctrines it considers deadly to the "American Way of Life" or the "Free Enterprise System," it may be neglecting the seedbed where those doctrines sprout and the conditions on which they feed.

While business concerns itself with labor efficiency, transportation costs, and other operating headaches, it may be neglecting external forces that affect the operations as much as anything that happens inside the four walls of the business.

The neglected element is the local community.

This community is the visible, tangible public.

### PUBLICS

In the language of the public-relations profession, there are many publics—the customer, the employee, the stockholder, the supplier, the trade and competitor, the press, the government, and what is called "the general public." At times these publics are reclassified in other ways, according to their interests—the church-going public, the music-loving public, the motoring public, and so on through the list of human activities.

But who are all these publics, and where are they? They are not

columns of statistics, or groups of buildings, or lists of names in an addressing-machine drawer. They are human beings. They live in homes. They live in a community.

Some of them live in the community surrounding the head office of a business. Some of them live in the community surrounding the main factory, some around the branch plant, some around the branch warehouse, some around the district headquarters, some around the service office, and some around the retail store handling the product.

None of them lives in a reservation set aside for "consumers," "stockholders," or "employees." They live side by side in common areas known as communities, all mixed together like the flour, sugar, eggs, and butter in a cake. Special groups of them may be singled out for special treatment, but in between these special contacts they are all exposed to the same evidences of the company's general behavior.

For in truth all of them belong in several categories at once. There is no employee who is not a consumer. There are few who are not voters. The same person is likely to be employee at the office, employer of domestic help at home, consumer of many products, supplier of others, stockholder in one or more corporations, voter, and taxpayer. But at all times he is a resident of the community, in daily contact with all the other kinds of publics.

### THE STARTING PLACE

So the community is a cross section of all the publics. To the extent that they are singled out for special and separate treatment, all the publics may be reached at the community level.

The community is, certainly, the place to start on any public-relations program, because it is the first point of contact with any of the publics.

But the community itself assumes special characteristics as a "public" to be treated as a special problem in public relations, because the one indivisible unit of the public is the individual.

And the place to find the individual is in the community where he lives and works and plays, where he rears his family, has his friends, his recreation, and his other interests.

As John Syme of Johns-Manville Corporation has said, "To me good public relations has always meant proper community relations, since, after all, the general public that is most interested in any particular firm is that part of it which knows its employees, their relatives and friends."

### WHO IS AFFECTED AND WHY?

Who should be concerned with the community? Who stands to gain or lose, to benefit or suffer from anything that happens in the community? Anyone who owns, manages, or is employed by a business; owns or rents a home; pays taxes; raises a family; or uses any public facilities in the community.

Why should business care about the community? Each company might have a different set of reasons, no two exactly alike, some perhaps in conflict. Consciously or unconsciously, though, every person in business who touches a community feels its impact in one way or another. People may feel detached from local affairs; but sooner or later there comes a time in every person's life when he asks, "Why don't 'they' do something about this?"—or when, if somebody does something about it, he howls in protest, "They can't do this to me!"

### THE SIX REASONS FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The people who do business of any kind in any city or town have a stake in what happens there for reasons of (1) *business survival*—what local people can do by political action or otherwise to hurt or help a business; (2) *business welfare*—what local conditions can do to efficiency of business operation and to efficiency and morale of employees; (3) *business promotion*—what community activities can do to create "good conversation" and good will for the business; (4) *public-opinion development*—because state and national legislative movements start in community groups;

(5) *personal and family welfare*—to provide the most desirable place to live and raise a family; (6) *personal satisfaction*—to gratify basic human instincts and urges by community activity.

In examining each of these six main reasons, it will be shown that there is a dollars-and-cents value in having a community whose services, facilities, and social relationships are sound and healthy. It will also be shown that there is the same value in being well thought of in the community, having good standing, and being regarded as a good citizen and a good neighbor. It will further be shown that for most persons and institutions these two values are so interwoven as to be virtually inseparable; and are so great that to neglect them may be a costly mistake of business management.

If this list seems to omit any mention of "civic duty" or "responsibility," and to include only motives based on self-interest, the omission is deliberate. That is not to imply that those to whom this book is addressed are not moved by unselfish considerations—nor, indeed, that actions motivated by self-interest are not also in the public interest. But "duty" and "responsibility" are broad and variable terms. Everyone is at times faced with a choice between conflicting motives, and even between conflicting duties and responsibilities. In order to make intelligent choices, people must know what the alternatives are.

But whatever the urge or motive, whether moved by an inner sense of duty or whether guided only by lines of practical advantage, it is necessary to know what a community expects of everyone in it in order to know how to adapt oneself successfully to it.

And in order to know what a community expects, it is necessary in turn to understand specifically what a community has to offer—what it can give to or take away from those in it. An appraisal of the community and why it is important will be covered in the next six chapters.

The remaining sections of the book will then be devoted to an examination of what business men and others can—and should—do if they wish to enjoy effective, profitable community relations.



## 2.

### *The Community and Business Survival*

ALL institutions, even dictatorships, exist under sufferance of the public.

Every business, every property title, every institution of government, every church, lodge, recreation, exists because the public considers it desirable—or, more accurately, because the public has not decided it is undesirable.

Every business and institution must sell itself and its practices to the public, not occasionally, not annually, but daily. Every business and institution must demonstrate every day that it is acting in the public interest; that it has the welfare of the community at heart. Let us consider some of the consequences if this is not done.

#### REGULATION

With the modern concept that all activities are related to the public interest, no business is immune to government regulation. If a business engages in practices which are against the public interest—or which the public thinks are against its interest, which is just as bad—the public is going to seek regulation to correct the practice. If a business is enjoying more benefits from government than it is paying for—or if the public thinks it is—the public will send the business a bill in the form of a tax or license fee.

There is no business, trade, or profession that will not someday need friends in the court of public opinion. And it is at the community level that regulation starts. So there are local regulations to be considered also.

### LOCAL REGULATION

Every business, institution, or person living, owning property, or doing business anywhere is subject to local taxes, fees, and charges which may vary in number, type, and degree of burden. The taxes, like all other regulations, are imposed for a variety of reasons, ranging from pure need for local revenues to a desire to restrict, control, or even prohibit the operation of the institution. Business licenses required by municipalities, for example, are usually a proper exercise of the police power, to permit adequate inspection and supervision and to assure the maintenance of health and other standards. At other times, however, license requirements are used competitively to protect an established type of local business against new competition, by making license fees prohibitive. Contests between various types of merchandising and between various amusement industries for larger shares of the local consumer dollar have often led to contests for passage or defeat of burdensome local tax and license fee measures. The public interest is not always clear, as in the case of street peddlers who undersell fixed-location merchants but who do not share local property taxes and other local responsibilities. In such cases the decision will ultimately go to the side that mobilizes the greatest public support.

It is in matters related to taxation that this may be seen most clearly.

### TAXES

Sometimes taxes are imposed punitively out of a general resentment against an unpopular business interest. At times, however, they are imposed to force corporations to pay by compulsion ex-

penses they had refused to pay as a voluntary contribution. Most common examples are in the field of social welfare: companies fail to support a volunteer organization doing charitable or social work; finally the social work is made a function of the local government, and the corporation is taxed for it. But the tax is not the same size as the donation might have been: it is usually double, triple, or larger.

Corporations give, on the average, only one third of the total contributed to community chests and similar volunteer service agencies; yet they may pay two thirds of local taxes. If a service activity is passed over to local government for failure of a corporation to support it, the corporation's share of the cost will be doubled even if the cost of the service remains the same. If the cost increases under government, as often happens, then the corporation's actual cost will be more than doubled.

In the long run the community will have the services that its citizens want. If corporations fail to provide, guide, and support these services as voluntary functions, they will pay—and pay far more—for them as government services.

Even when there is no punitive or competitive element involved, the question of how high the taxes and fees are to be on each type of business in the community may depend in large measure upon the standing of each group with the people of the community.

When local governments need new revenues, they look around for someone to tax. Fair-minded local officials may approach the problem objectively to decide how the tax load might be distributed more equitably in proportion to benefits, ability to pay, and such factors. More often, however, the targets for new tax burdens are those interests that have a reputation for taking more out of the community than they put back in, either in taxes or in other contributions to public welfare.

Finally, the issue is decided on the basis of who has the most friends in the public.

## OTHER REGULATIONS

But taxes and license fees are only a small example of the burdens and restrictions that may be imposed. Every step in the operation of the business is potentially subject to some kind of regulation designed to protect the public interest. Pure-food laws may govern the raw materials going into a plant, and anti-smoke and anti-stream-pollution laws may control the last morsel of waste product going out. Industrial safety laws may govern every piece of machinery in the plant; health ordinances may control the air and the light in which the workmen use the machines. Spur-track restrictions may compel double-hauling of supplies and products by truck; and truck ordinances may prescribe where and when those trucks may run, how heavy they may be, what fuel they may burn. Zoning ordinances may prevent expansion of the plant or its use in operations producing offensive odors, noise, or fumes. Other ordinances may regulate the hours a store may be open, the age and sex of the people it may employ, where and how it may receive its goods as well as deliver them.

One city may even impose regulations upon the people of another, as happens when a city health department prescribes the conditions under which milk must be produced if it is to be sold in the city.

To list all the activities that might be placed under local regulation would be to list every phase of industrial, commercial, professional, and even personal life. For there is virtually no detail of human existence that cannot be affected by some type of regulation if the majority of the people decide they want it—and scarcely a detail that is not now regulated, somewhere, somehow, by some jurisdiction.

## WHY REGULATIONS COME

Although there are sound reasons for the regulation of many business and industrial activities, there is a serious danger to the

survival of business in costly and crippling regulations that are born, not of necessity, but out of ignorance and ill will.

The ignorance may be that of the regulating body or that of the company about to be regulated. But in any case the company has failed to maintain sufficiently close contact with the public and the regulatory agency. Either the company has failed to know that the regulation was in the offing, so that it might take steps to forestall it, or it has failed to keep the official body informed as to reasons why the regulation is unnecessary, impractical, or unfair.

Ill will may be resentment against a particular practice or against a general company attitude, either of which could be corrected before the resentment reached such effective proportions.

Of one thing there is little doubt—that a regulation imposed by an unfriendly local agency will be more severe, more restrictive, and more costly than the corrective steps that the company might have taken in advance, or more costly than a milder regulation that might have been worked out in consultation between local agency and company.

There seems to be a tendency in head offices and legal departments of large corporations to think of local laws and ordinances as static—to think only of what the law permits today, and to act accordingly. That overlooks the fact that laws develop gradually out of conditions. A restrictive ordinance results usually from public resentment of a condition that has gone unregulated until it has become a public nuisance.

Thus, to assume that no provision need be made against stream pollution in the new branch town, just because the local ordinances there are silent on the matter, is to ask for trouble later when the community becomes aroused about the damage. The industry may be able successfully to resist ever doing anything about the pollution. For example, in one industrial area so many industries have grown up on one stream, and have grown so powerful, that their combined political force has been able to defeat all legislative efforts at abatement for nearly a generation.

Whether the direct cost of fighting the legislation over the years has been more or less than proper corrective or prevention measures would have cost originally, only the companies themselves know; but there is little question that the companies have suffered loss of good will worth far more than the preventive measures would have cost.

The same is true of smoke, soot, dust, fumes, or odors given off by factories, mills, and plants. The problem of "smog" has become a major sore spot in the relations of industry and the community. Local ordinances now govern most of it in most places, but not all of it in all places. To the extent that they are not controlled, voluntarily or by force of law, such plant off-givings probably touch and annoy more people than any other single offense a company can commit.

Whether local regulation should be resisted, accepted, or made unnecessary by prior action may depend upon the circumstances of each case. What is certain is that everyone and everything are potentially subject to regulation; that close and constant attention must be paid to the desires, temper, and attitude of a community if only to be sure of having some choice in regard to a threatened regulation.

#### FAVORABLE REGULATIONS

Ordinances and regulations are not always negative. Often a business has to seek favorable action by a regulatory body: a permit to establish a service station, store, or factory; a zoning ordinance to permit business expansion; a change in parking, trucking, delivery, or other rules. Then the business needs friends as much as when it wants to avoid a harmful regulation, and it may be even harder to obtain the favorable action than it is to prevent the unfavorable.

This is not to suggest that public officials act only on the basis of friendship or that regulations are passed out as favors to the officials' friends. Even granting that it is true in many cases, it is

nothing to be sought or encouraged. What we are talking about here is not favoritism or special privilege but just the simple matter of fairness to all concerned.

Public officials are human, and within the limits of their official duties and responsibilities they still make decisions on a human basis. When speed of action is imperative, and when officials' calendars are overcrowded, it is natural that priority is given to those who are well and favorably known, while strangers get only what they are entitled to under the law and no more. And where the question is not speed, but whether the action should be taken at all or not—whether a permit should be granted, for instance—the benefit of the doubt will usually be given to one who has established himself with the deciding official.

In many matters public officials have wide latitude and discretionary power to grant or refuse the requests made of them. Sometimes their decisions will hinge on their opinion of the person or company requesting the action. Do they believe in the integrity, honesty, or good faith of the applicant? Can the applicant be expected to act in the best interest of the community? Or, officials being human, has the applicant shown enough interest in other people's problems to deserve much consideration? When such questions are the key to favorable action, the answers will depend on how much the applicant has bothered to establish himself as a good citizen and a friendly neighbor.

Present-day business leadership condemns corruption in government as strongly as it condemns unethical business practices. There are exceptions, of course, just as there are mavericks and laggards in business ethics. But the majority have learned and are learning that corruption is a Frankenstein's monster that can turn against its own creator.

Anyone who has a price is on an auction block and can be bought for a higher price. As one wise sales executive has said, in frowning on the practices of salesmen passing out gifts, "If a pint will get us an order, two pints will take it away from us." The same

is true in government favors. If an official can be influenced by cash considerations, he can be weaned away by competing influences with more cash.

Worst of all, a venal public official will be subject to influences that will bankrupt the community, financially and morally. Waste, extravagance, and graft will send the tax rate shooting upward; legislation to favor one special interest will harass the others; vice and crime will run rampant. The cost to business in taxes, red tape, and lowered worker morale will usually outweigh any special advantage that can be gained.

So the aim of good community relations should be, not to make local government subservient or purchaseable, but to make it decent and independent. Then, within that kind of government, the aim should be to develop the acquaintance, working contact, and good standing that will make for the most favorable treatment that honest officials can give.

Enlightened business leaders have learned and demonstrated this as the way to deal with government in the community.



### 3.

## *The Community and Business Welfare*

Just as important as the negative function of protection against the community are the positive values of working for the benefits the community can bestow through maintenance of favorable conditions.

From a business standpoint the primary benefits are those that directly enhance the efficiency of the business operation or the efficiency and morale of its employees. There is not a business—not a profession—in any community in America that does not share directly in dollars-and-cents profit or loss from the improvement or the deterioration in (1) the physical condition of the city's physical plant; (2) the quality of service rendered by the city and other governmental agencies; (3) the quality of service rendered by civic and social agencies; (4) the availability of community resources and facilities to improve the physical, mental, and moral health of the populace.

What happens in the community may affect the costs, the efficiency, and the welfare of a business as much as anything that happens inside the four walls of the business.

It can be demonstrated that the community in which any business plant is located is nothing but an extension of that plant outside its own walls. Just as every influence of the home—cultural,

moral, religious, physical—finds its counterpart in community forces and contacts outside the home, so is every department of a business influenced by elements in the community outside the company's gates. The physical safety of the plant; the health, morale, and efficiency of the workers; the rate of labor turnover; the cost of recruiting new labor and the quality of personnel obtainable; insurance costs; the cost of handling and transporting goods; cost and quality of water, power, fuel, and materials—these and many other factors may be affected more by conditions outside the plant than by conditions inside.

If the efficiency of a single plant is in proportion to the physical and mental health of the workers in that plant—and no one seems to dispute that; we have elaborate programs of health, safety, diet, modern lighting, air conditioning, color schemes, music, recreation, and the like built on that thesis—if that is true for one plant, then certainly it is true for the entire community, viewed as one large, integrated complex plant.

Industry can afford to pay large premiums for anything that will reduce the time that a machine is idle. Anything that will cut down the time that a machine or a worker spends in doing a given unit of work, or increases the number of units done in a given period of time, is sought after and made the object of extensive research.

But most such research is confined to what happens inside the plant. What happens outside may be just as big a factor in costs, production, and performance.

#### TRANSPORTATION

What happens on the nearby streets and highways is an example. A plant engineer will spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars redesigning a plant and its assembly lines to cut a few minutes off the time spent in moving materials from one part of the plant to another; yet the trucks, salesmen's cars, and other vehicles of the plant may be losing hours because of traffic delays

outside. Retail stores spend fortunes on escalators and elevators so that their customers may visit many departments in a single short shopping visit; yet the customer's visit may be cut short or prevented entirely by traffic conditions.

The city streets and the rural highways are only an extension of the transportation facilities inside the factory gates and inside the store doors. The only difference is that someone else shares the results; and because someone else also shares the responsibility, it is usually left to that anonymous "someone else" to worry about. Finally, all of the "someones" share the results of neglect and inefficiency to a degree that would never be tolerated inside any of their business establishments.

The monetary cost may be measured for some highway conditions and estimated for others. Where highways have been shortened, it is easy to compute the total savings for all motorists; the savings for any one motorist or company will depend upon the amount of driving done over that highway. On one piece of highway in northern California, a new short cut saved six miles for the 5,000 vehicles per day that used it. At three cents per car mile, which highway authorities then used as the average operating cost, the savings totaled \$900 per day, or \$328,500 per year. Since the improvement cost only \$1,059,600, it was paid for by savings to passenger vehicles alone in three and a quarter years. Much greater savings to trucks, varying with their weights, would cut this time down even further.

## HEALTH

That it pays dividends to industry to have an organized community health program for its employees has been demonstrated in city after city. Where records of costs and savings have been kept, they have tended to conform with the findings of the United States Public Health Service, which has demonstrated that expenditures of \$8 per year per worker on a health program, tied in

to a community program, should yield \$12 of return to the company.

The Service, after a national health survey, estimates that 1,000,000,000 man-days are lost each year in the United States through illness. The money value of this loss is conservatively estimated at \$10,000,000,000, including loss of wages, medical and hospital costs, relief, and disorganization of industrial operations and the accompanying loss of production.

The cost to the employer, when an experienced employee is incapacitated by illness, has been estimated at one and one-half times the amount of the daily wage.

The economic loss from on-the-job inefficiency of workers who report to work in below-par health is impossible to estimate, but may be as great as that resulting from absenteeism. It is reckoned as one of the large causes of industrial accidents, it reduces both quantity and quality of output, and it often disrupts production relationships.

And yet, according to the leading authorities in the field, *both the causes and the incidence of sickness are mostly related to circumstances outside of actual employment.*

The causes of worker sickness are largely found in community conditions affecting the public health: sanitation, immunization, sewage disposal, water supply, milk supply, health education, nutrition, and general health supervision. In a report on health programs in Williamsport, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States says that 90 per cent of illness in the plant arises from causes outside the plant.<sup>1</sup>

#### FIRE PROTECTION

No business executive who has had a large fire sweep through his community will ever take the fire hazard lightly, no matter how fireproof he may consider his own establishment.

<sup>1</sup> "Industrial Health—A Tale of 3 Cities." Washington, D. C., Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1945.

Interruption of services, destruction of needed supplies, losses to customers, distraction of workers and consequent falling off of production—these are the cold, bare minimum of economic loss that every business in town suffers from every large fire, even disregarding the danger to one's own home and family and to the homes and families of employees. But no establishment is too fireproof to suffer direct damage in a fire of disaster proportions. That is why cities all over America have begun to go beyond the perfunctory stage of merely having a fire department, and have been organizing intensive community-wide drives against fire waste. The cities that have conducted these drives have a barometer by which to gauge the results of their efforts. In a nationwide intercity contest that has been carried on since 1923, no actively competing city has suffered a major conflagration; each year the value of property destroyed by fire in these cities has been below the national average, and in city after city insurance rates have been reduced. In 344 cities and towns competing in the contest, the total saving in one year, in reduced fire losses and reduced insurance premiums, totaled approximately \$50,000,000, according to the National Fire Waste Council.

### WORKER MORALE

Just as the health of workers is affected more by conditions outside the plant than by those inside, so is their morale raised or lowered by the local pattern of their lives on and off the job. Laboratory studies of worker efficiency have shown clearly that rate of output is closely correlated to worker attitudes and that attitudes, in turn, are compounded of many factors in which actual working conditions may or may not have any part at all. T. N. Whitehead, in commenting on Elton Mayo's studies of boredom in industrial occupations, points out, "that there is no simple relation between the work itself and the sentiment of boredom. Boredom when it exists is a part of the individual's attitude towards his

total situation; at no moment is his total situation so narrow as to include only the activity for which he earns his pay.”<sup>2</sup>

The “total situation” or total pattern of living of a worker includes all that he finds or fails to find to make up a full and satisfying life. Adequate housing, transportation, utilities, and shopping facilities are bare minimums; facilities for recreation, entertainment, and physical activity, opportunities for social contact, opportunities for personal recognition, possibilities of religious or fraternal association, reliefs and escapes from extremes of climate, educational, recreational, and other facilities for his family, even the physical appearance of the community—these are the things that, added to the basic conditions of eating, sleeping, and working, color the emotional life of every worker. Marked changes in any of these factors may so upset a worker emotionally that he will no longer be happy or contented in his job, and will even become a disturbing influence on the morale of others about him.

If Bill Jones is late to work and is docked an hour’s pay, just because his streetcar or bus was tied up in a traffic snarl, he is not going to be a very productive worker that day. If he is a leader in his production group, his mood may be contagious and affect others’ work. If General Manager Smith is late to a meeting and fails to make a sale, because his car was held up behind a snarl, he may take his bad temper out on the whole office force—and everyone’s office production will sag.

Ability to attract desirable new employees will usually be affected as much by general community conditions as by any other aspect of the employment. Prospective employees from out of town will look at the entire picture of job-and-community as one package, and will accept or reject it in terms of total satisfactions to be expected from it. Difficulty of attracting desirable personnel may ultimately be reflected in premium wage rates, as well as in lowered efficiency and output.

<sup>2</sup>T. N. Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1936, p. 11.

Gerald Eldridge Stedman, in an article in *Personnel Journal*,<sup>3</sup> suggests an "Appreciation Index" which (1) measures the attitude of workers toward a city as a place to work; (2) reflects climate, management-labor relationships, size, racial proportions, immigration, political characteristics, character of management thinking, and industrial relations; and (3) signals resistance which any forward-thinking management may face in attempting to establish cordial worker relationships in areas where callous practices of other industrial managements have tended to produce strife, bitterness, and unhappy worker attitudes.

Whether he recognizes it or not, or formalizes it in any way, every worker has such an Appreciation Index at least vaguely and subconsciously at work in his mind all the time.

#### EFFECT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

Social acceptance is a strong motive in human behavior, and the prestige factor is strong in the selection of or attitude toward a job. Examples of business institutions that have been able to hire and hold employees, because of the social prestige involved in working there, are plentiful.

Arthur W. Page points out that an employee is "justified in having a better opinion of his job and a greater satisfaction in it if all who mention the enterprise of which he is a part . . . speak well of it."<sup>4</sup>

Not only will those on the outside speak better of it if the company is known to do its share as a citizen of the community. The employee himself will feel more pride in his connection with the enterprise if he can see, from time to time, that it is living up to what he considers—or what his friends consider—the standards of being a good citizen.

In small towns working in the bank was traditionally the high

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Eldridge Stedman, "An Appreciation Index." *Personnel Journal*, June, 1945.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur W. Page, *The Bell Telephone System*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1941, p. 30.

point in prestige jobs, and the bank could often take its pick of the young men of each new generation. Today in small towns, in the biggest cities, and in nationwide organizations the selection of high-type personnel is more important than ever in the building of a successful organization; and enlightened companies are recognizing that a good name is a powerful aid in staffing their business. Ralph Starr Butler, in a handbook for the employees of General Foods, says "a company that is well thought of can attract the highest type of employee. If the public thinks that General Foods is a good company, fair, progressive, liberal, and enlightened, we have a chance to get the best person available to fill any vacancy."<sup>5</sup>

Imagine the effect on personnel recruitment and morale of a situation such as described in the above-mentioned article in the *Personnel Journal*.<sup>6</sup> A new employee was told by his landlady, "Oh, Mr. Roberts, I am so sorry to hear that you are going to work for —— Company, because it is a terrible place to work. They treat their employees so mean."

Evidence has been plentiful that such good or bad community attitudes are in direct proportion to the company's participation in community affairs and its conduct of a good community-relations program. Worker and community surveys<sup>7</sup> have been made to determine what factors are most potent in giving a company a reputation as "the best place to work" or "the worst place to work." These studies show that while wages, steady employment and condition of working quarters are important, they do not by themselves win a rating of "best." In fact, many of those rating as "best" were not in the highest bracket in those regards; but all were among those known as doing the most for their city.

The companies enjoying the highest public esteem were the companies that had recognized their responsibility to the com-

<sup>5</sup> Ralph Starr Butler, *Public Relations a Challenge and an Opportunity*. New York, General Foods Corporation, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> Stedman, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> The Public Opinion Index for Industry, *How to Get Along in the Plant Community*. Princeton, N. J., Opinion Research Corporation, 1946.



munity as including both participation in the community's affairs and informing the community fully about the company's affairs. The companies that considered their responsibility to the community to be discharged when they provided jobs paying good wages under good working conditions were rated at the bottom of those studied as "least desirable place to work."

That this was more than coincidence is further indicated by the fact that companies with a formal program of community relations, with staff personnel assigned to responsibility for executing the program, were the companies that rated highest in general public esteem and in acceptance as a good place to work. Those that ranked lowest in esteem had, for the most part, no formal policy or program and had assigned no specific responsibility to anyone on the staff for attention to community relations.

Because labor turnover is always costly and because, even in times of labor abundance, personnel management costs are considerable, anything that will enhance a company's prestige as a place to work has direct monetary value sufficient to justify a carefully directed community-relations program.

#### EFFECT ON LABOR RELATIONS

As important as the attracting of desirable new employees is the morale of old employees, as it bears upon the labor relations of a company. Here again the beneficial effects of an active community-relations program can be far-reaching. These effects will be felt both in the internal relations with individual employees within the plant and in general relations with organized labor outside the plant.

One of the most damaging influences on employee morale, and one of the hardest to overcome, is the feeling on the part of employees that they "don't belong." People are unhappy and feel unsuccessful in any group contact if they feel that they are not a true part of the group and have no importance in it. While there are many ways in which that feeling can—and should—be com-

bated among employees, company participation in community affairs is one of the best.

Among the many forms of community relations that will be discussed later, those that involve participation by all the employees naturally will do most to create the feeling of "belonging." Almost as much can be accomplished, however, if the employees can feel proud that their company has done something outstanding to help the community.

The degree of participation by employees, either in the actual project or in the pride of accomplishment, will vary with the type of program—and with the skill of management—but if maximum participation is sought as a goal, it can be a valuable aid to employee relations.

What an active community-relations program can do to relations with organized labor is even more startling, as shown by studies of worker and community attitudes mentioned above.<sup>8</sup>

Of the companies that had won community and worker esteem by their community-relations efforts and were known as "the best place to work" in their cities, not a single one had had a strike in the past ten years. On the other hand, of those that had no community-relations program and had failed to gain community prestige, half had had strikes within ten years, and nearly half within the past year. Only a fourth of the top group was even unionized, whereas three fourths of the bottom groups had unions.

That these companies had not bought their way out of labor difficulty by paying abnormally high wages is shown by the fact that the companies that had been most free of strikes were in only a medium bracket as to wages, while those suffering the most labor trouble were in the medium to high wage bracket.

Many factors, of course, enter into the establishment of unions, some of which may be beyond management control. Nor is it the purpose of this volume to debate whether unions are good or bad, per se. What can be agreed by most people is that labor friction

<sup>8</sup> The Public Opinion Index for Industry, *op. cit.*

and strife are damaging to everyone. Because it will tend to reduce the friction and strife with workers, whether organized or unorganized, a community-relations program has a value which can be measured in dollars, as the cost of labor disturbance can be measured in dollars.

Aside from the effect upon individual workers inside the plant, community-relations activity can be valuable because it will throw management into friendly contact with union officials on problems of common interest. If it is true that the progress of collective bargaining has often been impeded by the lack of acquaintance and the lack of mutual confidence and faith between the two bargaining sides, then anything that will bring leaders of management and labor together on friendly common ground and "dehorn" each in the eyes of the other is good relations. Community-relations activity is such a meeting ground. The truth of that thesis has been demonstrated repeatedly in city after city.

#### EFFECT OF COMMUNITY GROWTH ON BUSINESS PATTERNS

Not only will the quality of community life affect the ability of an employer to attract or to retain higher-class personnel and otherwise affect the efficiency of the business operation, but it can affect the future welfare of the business in many other ways. These ways are not obvious, because of the intricate interdependence of businesses in our economy. But the consequences can be drastic.

For instance, any major change in the character of the community might affect the future markets of many lines of business. A community that has been largely residential may have supported many specialty shops catering only to a select class of trade. The influx of certain types of industry might drive some of that clientele away and make the specialty shops unprofitable. Conversely, construction of a large public project, with condemnation of property, might force some industries to move and deprive other businesses in the community of the patronage that they generate.

## TAXES

Every taxpayer is concerned about the amount of taxes he pays. If he is intelligent rather than emotional about it, however, he is more concerned about what he gets for his taxes, and whether he gets his money's worth, than he is about the absolute dollar cost. That has been tested in the location of industrial plants; local tax rates are always a considerable factor in decisions on new locations, but trained plant-location engineers always look closely at the services rendered by the taxing agencies. The quality of schools, streets, fire protection, police, health, and other services in relation to their cost, and the extent to which these facilities add to or subtract from the cost of the company's operations, are the determining factor as to whether taxes are high or low.

Nevertheless, because taxes high or low are an expense, everyone who pays them is concerned with the conditions that require the spending of tax funds. And those conditions are seldom evenly distributed. In every city in America some of the people and some of the property are paying a price for something that is wrong with the people or the property in another part of town.

If anyone doubts this, let him look at this picture, which averages the experience of principal cities throughout America. Although slums and blighted areas comprise about 20 per cent of the metropolitan residential areas, they account for:

33 per cent of the *population*

45 per cent of the *major crimes*

55 per cent of the *juvenile delinquency*

50 per cent of the *arrests*

60 per cent of the *tuberculosis victims*

50 per cent of the *disease*

35 per cent of the *fires*

45 per cent of the cost of *local-government services*

but produce only 6 per cent of the tax revenues.

## THE COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS PROMOTION

The most effective public service is often based on enlightened self-interest. Nowhere is that more true than in the community field. Community relations undertaken solely for selfish purposes may backfire; but where the enlightenment is at least as great as the self-interest, both community and self may profit.

But while there is no better business builder, in most lines, than active community contact, it is a paradox that community activity will be a better sales builder if it isn't used for that purpose. The same axiom also applies in large measure to the other direct public-relations benefits that can come from community activity: "If you don't try to cash in, you will. And if you do try to cash in, you may fail entirely."

If a company representative, for instance, becomes known as using his community-organization contacts solely to promote sales, he will be resented and his company resented. But for those who approach community relations without any immediate thought of direct sales promotion, it is a rich source of the good will that produces sales.

#### 4.

### *The Community and Public-Opinion Development*

WHILE propaganda may be generated from a central source, public opinion forms at the grass roots.

The agencies that are effective in forming political, social, or economic opinion are always organized from the community level up. Both major political parties are strongly organized locally; and while other factors are at least as important, the failure to carry a particular state has often been traced to a failure to organize strongly at the local level.

The groups that influence legislation nationally are organized strongly at the local level. The farm organizations—Farm Bureau, Grange, Farmers Union, National Cooperative Council—all have strong local units in most States, with frequent contact between Congressmen and the farm locals. Labor unions are built on the base of locals, federated into nationals and internationals. On the other hand, the National Association of Manufacturers has only in recent years had regional offices and has no local-organization structure comparable to that of the farm and labor groups. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has regional offices, and local chambers of commerce are members of the national Chamber; but the relationship is loose, and only recently has an attempt been made to build up local National Affairs Committees as a close

liaison between the local units and the national Chamber. Is it more than a coincidence that for so many years farm and labor groups had more success in obtaining what they wanted from Congress than business groups had?

Women's organizations that have been effective in influencing national thinking are all organized locally. The League of Women Voters is built on the pyramid pattern of local, state, and national units. The Federation of Women's Clubs is built on the same pattern, as is the Congress of Parents and Teachers, which has been potent in school affairs.

When the CIO entered national politics in 1944 through the Political Action Committee, one of its first moves was to instruct its leaders on local precinct and neighborhood organization. The precinct and neighborhood organization plan was the heart of the Political Action Committee movement, and the CIO-PAC manual, *Guide to Political Action*, is a model for anyone who contemplates engaging in a political campaign. It was supplemented by pamphlets on *Organizing the Community* and chapters in the *Political Primer for All Americans* on "Precinct Captains and How They Grow."

The story of that campaign has been told in a book, *The First Round*, by Joseph Gaer, which combines most of the manual and pamphlet material used in the campaign. It is a story of building a national movement at the community level.

### THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

It is surprising that business leaders who would not think of spending money to advertise their products nationally with no provision for local dealer follow-up will try to influence national political, social, and economic thought without giving any attention to the local "point of sale."

How important is the small urban community in shaping American life today and the course of America tomorrow? Two trends are pertinent: the shift to urban centers, and the continued in-

fluence of the small urban community. In 150 years the percentage of America's population living in cities has risen from 5.1 per cent in 1790 to 56.5 per cent in 1940; more than one third of our population is in cities larger than 50,000 people.

Yet in national affairs the smaller city continues to be a potent influence. An analysis of the Seventy-Ninth Congress shows that one third of the House came from home towns of less than 5,000 people, and one third of the Senate from towns less than 7,500; half the House came from places smaller than 18,000, and half the Senate from places smaller than 22,000; two thirds of the House from places smaller than 60,000, and two thirds of the Senate from places smaller than 40,000.

In practical political terms, that means that a majority in both houses could be obtained from representatives of cities of less than 22,000 population; the two-thirds vote of either house, to override a veto, might come from representatives living in cities of less than 60,000; while one third of either house, from cities of less than 7,500, could block any two-thirds vote.

While many of these congressmen and senators may have larger cities within their districts, the effect of their home environment upon their thinking is profound and must be reckoned with by those interested in influencing national movements.

If the people in these smaller communities are not satisfied with any part of our social, economic, or political system, they are in a position to see that it is changed. If they are not convinced that business as it is conducted is good for the nation, they can see to it that it is conducted differently.

Small towns, like farms, are also a source of new population for larger cities. Large cities have such low birth rates, authorities say, that if their population were not renewed from outside, they would almost disappear in four or five generations. So the indirect influence of small towns upon the political, social, and economic thought of the large cities is likewise not to be overlooked.

So those who are concerned with the shape and the trend of



thought and action in America should be concerned with what happens in the small town, the branch-plant town, the branch-office town.

As an example of what people are thinking in smaller towns and rural areas, a poll of editors of weekly newspapers showed 65 per cent as believing that corporations are less favorably regarded than their products or their services.

### LEGISLATIVE WORK

If corporate managers have awakened to the significance of such polls, or to the importance of smaller communities in preserving the private competitive economy, they have not shown it by any extensive participation in shaping the course of political movements at the local level. That is a fancy way of saying that they have not gone into local politics, either for the election of candidates or for the influencing of legislation.

This was shown in a survey of corporate public-relations activities made by the writer. Of replies received from every section of America, and from leaders in nearly every major business classification, one pattern seems to run consistently throughout: "We never take part in legislative activities."

Granted that the company as a company need not express an opinion, its officers as individuals must if they want to preserve the system under which their enterprises operate. With the growing concentration of business in corporate hands, the people of ability, the people who should be leaders in any age, are more and more going to be corporation executives. If they are too timid to stand up and be counted on public issues, they must accept the fact that they are surrendering the fate of their corporation into the hands of people who are not afraid to speak—and people who, for the most part, will not have the same conception of what is best for that corporation or the nation.

People who won't stand up and be counted have no right to complain when the score is tallied.

A few signs are appearing, however, that business groups are tackling the problem of political philosophies in a nonpolitical way at the community level. As a first step, the nonpolitical approach may be better because it is based upon personal contact and personal acquaintance between business, church, school, and other local leaders.

### THE PEORIA CONFERENCE

One of the outstanding examples has been in Peoria, where the Peoria Conference on Education, Labor and Business, and the Peoria Clergy, Industry and Labor Group are well-organized instruments of the community. Both meet monthly, one on the third Wednesday and the other on the fourth Tuesday. Together they have built mutual understanding of the problems, the aims, and the views of all four groups, both in relation to their own interests and in relation to national issues.

Out of Peoria have come some of the best statements of the principles involved in the community approach to national political, social, and economic problems.

As L. J. Fletcher, Director of Training and Community Relations for Caterpillar Tractor Company, has said: "The question is, 'How can understanding be developed and confidence re-created, on the part of the general public, in the demonstrated ability of our free industrial system to best serve all people in the future?'"

"There is but one way this job can be done. There is but one place it can be done. And there is but one group which can do it. The job must be done *in each community, by the men in the industries and businesses of that community*. The busy business executive can no more write a check and buy public good will than he can commission a friend to sell his sterling qualities as a potential husband. The 'Miles Standish' business man must speak for himself."

Or, as Roland Neff of R. G. LeTourneau Co., also in Peoria, expresses it: "The national political and economic climate desired

by industry is largely dependent upon the public relations activities of each company in each individual community in the nation."

Mr. Fletcher's assistant at Caterpillar, Fred R. Jolly, sums it up this way: "We have a philosophy that if we solve our problems on a community level there can be no problems on a national level."

### WORD OF MOUTH

Why is the community so important in shaping political philosophies? Why are home towns important in the formation of public opinion? Aside from the fact that congressmen and other legislators come from home towns somewhere, and that home towns are a handy place for constituents to buttonhole their representatives, why are the home constituencies the places where the movements grow?

Because that is where people see each other face to face and exchange ideas by word of mouth.

Public relations, or public opinion, never crystallizes into anything important until one person says something to another person by word of mouth. Publicity, the printed word, may be the raw material of public opinion—the seed—but word of mouth, or "gossip," is the soil that feeds and fertilizes the seed into a living organism.

And the community is the seedbed. Arthur E. Morgan, educator, engineer, and pioneer in the movement to revitalize the small community, calls the community "the seedbed of society." He has traced the part played by villages in preserving freedom of thought and high ideals of human life and culture during the Middle Ages, and before, when forces of violence submerged the finer qualities of human society. As Morgan says: "The free men in obscure Swiss valleys who kept alive the ancient tradition of democratic life may have had more enduring influence than the heads of the Holy Roman Empire."<sup>1</sup>

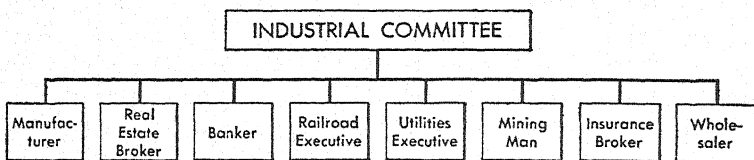
<sup>1</sup> Arthur E. Morgan, *The Small Community*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1942, p. 11.

## INTERLOCKING RELATIONSHIPS IN A COMMUNITY

The public opinion that develops within a community may be opposition from conflicting groups or it may be support from affiliated and sympathetic interests. The very fact that the community is a blending of divergent interests makes its effects so much more far-reaching. The interlocking and overlapping character of community groups multiplies the effect of every contact.

To see how these contacts ramify outward in a community, chart and trace the members of any chamber of commerce industrial committee with their contacts, for example. The chart quickly begins to look more like a genealogy than an organization chart.

First, here is the committee, with its typical members:

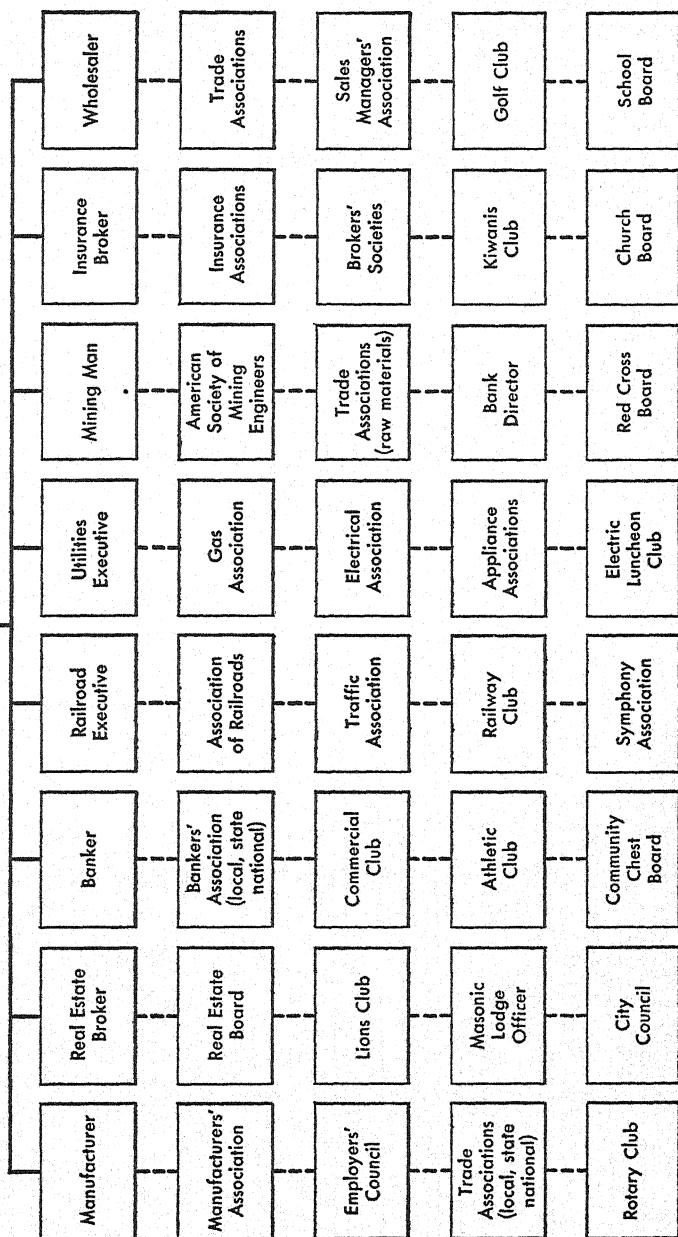


They look like a compact little group, all at about the same economic level and possibly all moving in the same rather narrow little circle—or do they? Let's look at the same chart, extended to show the organizations to which each belongs.

Many of these organizations are, to be sure, business groups. But if the organizations on the bottom tier of this chart were similarly analyzed—the community-chest board, for instance, and the school and church boards—it would become apparent that the contacts reached over into labor, educational, religious, and other nonbusiness circles.

Then there are the wives of these organization members, who themselves belong to organizations of many kinds. They belong to parent-teacher associations, leagues of women voters, federations of women's clubs, garden clubs, social-welfare agencies, community-

# INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE



chest committees, and other groups that in many respects influence local opinion more than their husbands' organizations do.

The interlocking directorates of big corporations that have been viewed with alarm by social and economic observers are as nothing compared with the interlocking areas of influence within a community, and from one community to another.

## 5.

### *Personal Satisfaction In Community Relations*

AMONG the six main reasons why it is important for business and the people who work in it to participate in community-relations work, there are two that are personal—personal for the company executive, and personal for the employees of the company at every level.

Although they are personal, these factors belong in a discussion of corporate relations for two reasons: not only are they an extra dividend of inducement to the company employee to participate for the good of the company, but also the personal values are of a kind that add to the stability and effectiveness of the employees in their work.

These personal reasons include first, the factors of personal and family welfare which are dependent upon the welfare of the community; and second, the personal satisfaction there is to be obtained from the work itself.

Personal and family welfare are obviously linked with the general welfare of the community. Every human being wishes to do all he can to provide the most desirable place to live and raise a family.

Perhaps not so obvious are the personal satisfactions to be derived from community-relations work. We may, therefore, leave

the question of general welfare and consider for a moment the psychological factors which are involved.

Personal psychological factors play an important part in the work that one does in the community. Not only does it make a difference to the community what kind of person one is; the very kind of person he is will depend to some extent upon his life in the community.

### THREE ASPECTS OF PERSONAL FACTORS

We shall now look briefly at three aspects of the personal factors in community relations. First we shall take note of the therapeutic value of this work both as an outlet for normal persons and as a channel for the relief of actual neurotic tensions. Then, in discussing the relations of this work to the development of well-rounded personality, we shall see how it provides an opportunity for every talent and every kind of person, introvert or extrovert as the case may be. In conclusion we shall take a brief glance at the basic urges, the primary motives which lie behind our work in community relations.

### ASSOCIATIONS AND OUTLETS

Without pressing the point so far as to describe community-relations activity as a sufficient cure in itself for personality difficulties, there is evidence that both normal, well-balanced persons and neurotics as well can find much that is valuable in this work of community relations.

For the normal person community activity will offer richly enjoyable associations. It will provide outlets for many of the basic drives and urges—for self-expression, for the esteem of others, for the use of creative, executive, or other talents, for idealisms, and for hobby interests in every field.

For the neurotic the same resources—associations and outlets—offer the hope of wholesome cures for many ailments, whether nervous, mental, or psychosomatic. Psychologists quoted in a maga-



zine symposium say "One of the best ways to avoid or relieve mental and nervous fatigue is to develop some outside interest. It will take your mind off yourself. It will help you to relax."<sup>1</sup>

### PERSONALITY AND SERVICE

Link defines personality as *the extent to which the individual has developed habits and skills which interest and serve other people.*<sup>2</sup>

He tells of the cases of neurotic individuals with warped personalities, wretched with distrust, inferiority, fears, and insecurity resulting from too narrow a concentration on the individual's own immediate problems. He describes the change that has come in these people as they have turned to social and civic activities—as he says, "have converted their energies to the service of others."

He points out that the practice of serving others leads to a wider and wider range of skills and abilities; that the one who develops his personality by applying his energies to "habits and skills that interest and serve other people" gains a by-product reward in acquiring a wider range for his own enjoyment. "The growth of a personality and the growth of a person's range of interest, skills and pleasures are one and the same thing."<sup>3</sup>

Joshua Loth Liebman takes up this same theme in *Peace of Mind*. Modern philosophers, he says:

. . . have exploded the eighteenth century idea that the individual is endowed at birth with a "mind" by means of which he enters into social relations. These philosophers maintain that the individual achieves a mind through the social influence of language and the group impact on the plastic growing substance of our personality.

Thus, our interdependence with others is not a matter of religious idealism at all. It is the most encompassing fact of human reality. "Thou shalt have relations with thy neighbors" is a law of psychological life, and many of our most difficult problems arise from the operation of this law. . . . The first fundamental truth about our individual

<sup>1</sup> "You Need Not Be Tired," *Look*, March 4, 1947, pp. 78-79.

<sup>2</sup> Henry C. Link, *The Rediscovery of Man*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1938, pp. 60-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

lives is the indispensability of . . . relatedness to some treasured person, or group, the feeling of belongingness to a larger whole and of being of value to other men. The source of all the basic anxieties in human nature is a feeling of being alone and helpless in a hostile world, and the first compulsion of life is the weaving of a stable pattern of relationship between ourselves and our parents and all of those who in time take the place of our parents—the beloved, the friend, the co-worker. Science, as a matter of fact, teaches us today that we can understand the universe only in terms of relatedness, that things are nothing in themselves, in isolation, that even the atom has significance only in some pattern of organization. . . . Everywhere we turn in the laboratory, whether in physics or chemistry or biology or in psychology, we find that isolation is what is impossible and that relationship is everything. . . . We are the creations of our environment. . . . Our personality, far from being a self-created substance, is a fabric woven on the loom of other personalities from the cradle to the grave.<sup>4</sup>

So much for the therapeutic, curative values of community work. What of the values for the well-balanced, well-integrated person, the person with no noticeable neurosis or complexes? While such persons are probably rarer than is generally acknowledged, they do exist; and they are found, in one of their most congenial habitats, in community relations.

We said earlier that for these persons community-relations work will offer richly enjoyable associations and will provide outlets for many of the basic drives and urges. Let us examine that assertion.

#### THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS

For the extrovert who enjoys contact with other people, community relations is the happy hunting grounds. Everything he does involves direct personal dealing with other human beings; and he can take his pick of any kind, type, or variety. On the working committees and boards he finds mostly his own type, the other extroverts who are motivated by the same desire for public service. But even amongst these he will find the widest assortment of breeds,

<sup>4</sup>Joshua Loth Liebman, *Peace of Mind*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1946, pp. 60-63.

as far as their other interests and activities are concerned. If he enjoys tackling people who differ from himself, he will have plenty of opportunity for that. Not only are they on his own committee, where there will always be some kind of minority element, but if he goes out to raise money, sell memberships, or ring doorbells on any kind of drive—even to persuade people, as an air-raid warden, to save their own skins by being co-operative—he will find all the tough prospects he needs.

Not all well-adjusted people are extroverts; and the introverts can find equally satisfying assignments in community work. In every organization there is a place for the speechmakers, the hand-shakers, and the dues-takers. And there is also a place for those who work quietly, by themselves or in small groups, doing the technical, professional, mechanical, or other skilled detail work. The tax and legislative committees that analyze complex pieces of legislation, and prepare reports and recommendations on new community problems, need inquiring minds and the ability to concentrate in solitude for long periods of time. Auditing and accounting chores of local groups need people who can deal with figures. Shows and exhibitions need people who can work out mechanical, technical, and artistic problems behind the scenes as well as in front. There is literally no talent and no temperament that cannot find a highly rewarding outlet somewhere in community activity.

#### MAKING A HOBBY OF THE COMMUNITY

Many a business man has followed the advice of James B. Bamford, executive director of the Reading Community Chest, to "make your town your hobby."

"How a Phineas T. Barnum could enjoy himself in the trumpet-blowing department of a modern community chest campaign! Any group of youngsters would follow a 'Gentleman Jim' Corbett from the street corner into a boy's club. An Abraham Lincoln's wit and persuasive ability would be a Heaven-sent aid in helping to iron out the tricky problems of a Better Business Bureau. And a Ben

Franklin would revel in the wealth of know-how readily available today in every city! . . . In each of us there's a bit of the circus showman, the proud athlete, and the practical wit and philosopher. Civic affairs offer a place for us to shine whatever our special ability—if we like people and if we earnestly believe in democracy.”<sup>5</sup>

Later, in discussing the overlapping and duplication that often exist among social-work agencies, he adds: “This multiplicity of agencies and the lack of solid information make one of many opportunities that challenge the civic hobbyist who has technical training.

“The cost accountant, for example, could analyze the added expense in manpower and added expense in money resulting from having two agencies doing work which one might conceivably do alone.

“The psychologist could ascertain the values of the slight differences in program, to determine whether the added expense is justified by the potential gain of having the members in the program that is right for them.

“And then the market analyst, skilled in determining preferences, could find out whether the boys and girls actually pick their respective organizations because of the special benefits of the different programs or for some other reason.”<sup>5</sup>

There is ample evidence to show that community-relations work offers rewards to normal, well-balanced persons in opportunity for rounded personality development as well as providing an actual means of therapy for those who may be troubled in their social adjustments.

## MOTIVATIONS

It remains to consider briefly the basic motives which underlie all this work.

Whether they are called drives, urges, or impulses, there are cer-

<sup>5</sup> James B. Bamford, “Make Your Town Your Hobby.” *Rotarian*, August 1947, pp. 32-33.

tain motivations for human behavior that appear so universally that, for our purpose here, it makes no difference whether they are inherited or acquired:

Among these common urges are:

- The craving to excel and succeed
- The urge to fight persistent interference
- The urge to relieve suffering—impulse of sympathy
- The urge to care for and protect children—parental impulse
- The craving for companionship—gregarious impulse
- The craving for social approval

There are other strong motivations, but aside from the physical urges more directly related to personal and race survival, those listed above are among the strongest of the human impulses. And all these can find their highest gratification in community activity.

The satisfaction of these fundamental human motives may, therefore, be added to the list of personal satisfactions and rewards from community-relations work, along with the development of a well-socialized personality and the relief of inner tensions and strains.

## 6.

# *The Community and the Branch Office*

### PLANT-CITY RELATIONS

EVERYTHING that is said here about business in general, and its relations to its community, applies with special force to the branch office, to the branch plant, and to businesses that have any kind of branches.

Throughout the second part of this book—the “how to do it” part—attention will be called to the special problems of the absentee-owned business. Many are the same as the problems of the home-grown, single-unit business; but many arise out of the fact of having many units, with ownership and control centered somewhere separate from the local operations.

### HANDICAPS: PREJUDICE AND IGNORANCE

Being a branch plant imposes many handicaps and burdens, some of which are founded in prejudice and ignorance but are no less real on that account. The psychological handicap of being an “outsider” and being so regarded is enough of a hurdle to overcome in itself, and there are others. Surveys<sup>1</sup> have shown that two thirds of the people of a community, when questioned, will say that a

<sup>1</sup> The Public Opinion Index for Industry, *op. cit.*

local concern is of more benefit to a community than a branch of an outside corporation. They will cite a variety of reasons for thinking so. Most of them give a rather general reason: that the local firm has greater "civic pride" and more "interest in the community." Others are more specific and say that a local company's earnings remain in the community, while the outsiders' money is taken out; that a local company hires more local people and is not so likely to bring in outsiders; that it takes a greater interest in its workers because most of them are from the same town; or that there is less likelihood of a local company moving away if business is poor or conditions change.

That these feelings are often based on ignorance or prejudice is evidenced by the frequent ignorance of whether a particular company is actually locally owned or is a branch. Less than half the people interviewed in one survey actually knew which was which—and yet they had strong feelings about the outsiders.

In other cases the prejudice and misinformation, while just as strong, are of a different sort and tend to illustrate another type of handicap that attaches to being a branch. They exemplify another reason why leaders of national concerns have a responsibility to their branches and should recognize that branches often suffer innocently for the ills of the parent company.

In one such case a local branch of a large national firm had had excellent labor relations ever since it was established. It had had no strikes, no lockouts, no interruptions of work through labor trouble; in fact, employer-employee relations had been so good that no union of any kind had ever been organized there. The company had well-developed programs of employee welfare and of community relations.

Yet nearly a third of those in the community who were interviewed thought the branch had "bad labor trouble" and rated it poorly in most of the other factors of public esteem—all because of the bad reputation the company had gained nationally for poor labor relations.

## CHANGING PATTERNS OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

The pattern of industrial growth in the twentieth century has produced a different relationship between industry and community from what prevailed in the nineteenth.

The factory that grew up in the nineteenth century grew out of the community itself. Starting often in the back room of a home or in a barn or blacksmith shop, it grew only gradually into a mass-production unit. It was only toward the end of the last century and the beginning of this one that industries were born full grown in new communities, through the accumulation of corporate capital to start a new industry or through the opening of a branch plant of an old one.

World War II accelerated the trend toward decentralization, and there are many signs on the horizon to indicate that the trend will continue. That will intensify the problem of the branch-house town: the community whose top-ranking business executives are transferred in and out; whose biggest plant investments are owned and controlled from distant head offices; whose largest employers (and, presumably, most competent management talent) have no roots in the community.

### PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

If these branch managements don't want the communities to resent this rootlessness, and above all if they don't want the smaller communities to lose the character that attracted the branch plant in the first place, they will see that roots are put down. These representatives of large national firms can, if they will, make a contribution that is unique and that goes far beyond "doing their share." They can pass on the benefits of national organization—the results of research in every field, the advanced techniques of management, the most enlightened practices in employee relations, the whole field of modern business knowledge—all of it can be put to constructive community service.



But branch plants can easily fail to do these things, and so fail to grasp one of their great opportunities. How they fail will be analyzed in detail later; suffice it to say here that the community will not overlook such failures. In the eyes of the community, everyone regardless of his origins is either in it and of it or is outside it—there are no in-betweens. And one who represents a branch of outside interests is likely to remain an outsider in the community's eyes until he can prove that he has come in and made himself part of it. The burden of proof is heavier on the branch than on the home townner.

This has been recognized by many executives and by writers in the business field. Ralph Starr Butler, Vice-President of General Foods Corporation, points out:

A business regarded as impersonal, run like a machine by some unknown group of policy makers, has an initial handicap in establishing good public relations. We cannot match the confidence-building opportunities of a small business where the owner has direct and frequent contacts with his customers. Our manufacturing plants and the other centers of our operations are located in many different towns and cities. These places are literally our front yards. The feeling about General Foods in all these communities is of tangible importance. Not only does it have a direct effect on many phases of plant activities, but its influence radiates out to large areas of the nation. If we are generally regarded as good employers and good neighbors by the people in the towns where we operate, that favorable opinion will extend beyond the town boundaries, and will be reflected in the attitude of many other people in surrounding sections of the country. Unfortunately the reverse is equally true. Unsatisfactory public relations within a community become multiplied and exaggerated as the impression spreads into other areas.

Here we have a special problem. In our factory towns General Foods is thought of as an absentee owner. An absentee owner is subject to certain rather natural suspicions and questionings. He is suspected of being less interested in the local community than a local owner would be, with purposes and practices not always in accord with the best interests of the locality. We must try to overcome this prejudice, and

to make General Foods as well thought of in the factory towns as we should like to be in every other section of the country.

Of course the first goal in our factory towns is to deserve and obtain the good will of the citizens for the local plants—for their management, their policies, their treatment of employees, and all the many other things that go to make up good neighborliness.<sup>2</sup>

### IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Because of these natural and widespread attitudes toward absentee owners, the branch plant or store is "on the spot" even more than other operators would be. Shortcomings and mistakes that might be overlooked in a home townner become magnified into major offenses when committed by an outsider. A single isolated offense is likely to be taken as evidence of a general policy of callousness or carelessness.

The spotlight is turned on the branch or chain operator to see that he is doing his part for local welfare. In the belief that the outside interests share in the benefits and protection provided by the community, the people of the community will expect the outsider likewise to contribute to meeting the community's needs—for hospitals, for health centers, for recreation facilities, or whatever is most needed at the moment.

The branch must give thought to its policies on local relations of all kinds. Its practices in regard to local buying, local banking, and local hiring will be noticed more than those of locally owned units. Its labor policies, its pattern of shutdowns and layoffs, and their effect on the community will be matters of keen community concern. So will its housekeeping habits—landscaping and the maintenance of buildings—and its degree of friendliness and hospitality.

The branch will need the good will of the community at least as much as the local business needs it; it will receive that good will to the extent that the community thinks it has been earned; and

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Starr Butler, *Public Relations, A Challenge and an Opportunity*. New York, General Foods Corporation, 1944.

the community may be doubly critical in deciding what the branch has earned.

In his comments on plant-city relations, Millard Fought says:

Corporations not only are legal persons, they also are citizens of the community in which they exist. Whether they are looked upon as good or bad neighbors of the other citizens depends largely on how effectively their public relations is conducted.

Plant-city public relations is basically a matter of being a good neighbor and a good citizen—not only in the eyes of the plant's own workers, but also to the rest of the townsfolk. For a locally owned or managed company this usually is a matter of good common sense. The biggest problems arise in branch plants of companies whose headquarters are in some other city.

Such plants suffer from split personalities. Their body is one place, but their "mind" is somewhere else. As a result, their neighborliness, as expressed through the Company's public relations, is largely in the form of handouts or statements issued from corporation headquarters with little or no knowledge of the facts of life in the plant city.<sup>3</sup>

What those "facts of life" are, and how neighborliness can be expressed in terms of those facts, will be the subject of the latter part of this book.

<sup>3</sup> Millard Fought, "Plant-City Relations." *Tide*, March 8, 1946, p. 13.

## 7.

### *What the Community Expects*

IF THE community can have so profound an effect upon every person and every institution, are they completely at its mercy? Does it strike at random, like lightning, and is it only by accident that some are helped while some are hurt? Or is there a pattern of design?

Who are the ones who profit and who are the ones who lose in a community?

#### THE RULE

Between the deviations and the exceptions, like the straight-line plotting of a statistical average, there runs a consistent principle which may be stated as follows; and it is the core of this book:

Those who identify themselves with the community; who show their concern for the community's welfare; who make all their actions conform with the community interest; who show their friendly interest in the people of the community; who give a hand on community problems and try to make a positive contribution to community welfare—those will tend over a period of time to reap the rewards and benefits from what the community has to offer.

Those who fail to make themselves a part of the community; who fail to give a hand on community problems; who take something out of the community and put nothing back; who show a lack of concern—or worse, who show contempt—for the well-being of the community or of the people in the community; who have no regard for the attitude

of the community and furnish grounds for unfavorable gossip; who violate, oppose, or ignore the community interest as determined by the majority of those in the community—those will tend, over a period of time, to suffer penalties at the hands of the community.

How this general rule is translated into specific practice will be the subject of Part Two.

### WHAT THE COMMUNITY MEANS TO ITS PEOPLE

Communities grow out of the needs of people, who find that they can satisfy those needs better by living close to each other or close to some common resource. They may be drawn together initially by one need, such as a common employment; once together, they find that many of their other needs can be satisfied only by acting in concert. Public utilities, protective services, transportation, and communication—all of the protections and conveniences of community life combined—are only a few of the needs that people must supply in common. The need of companionship, of cultural enrichment, of education, of recreation, of the very process of group activity, are needs just as vital to the health and well-being of human beings as the first-named group.

The community and its life are an expression of the people who live there and who work in the factory, the bank, the grocery store. Few of the people who work for others can find a complete outlet or complete self-expression in their jobs alone. Wise personnel policies can make the job a positive instead of a negative factor in workers' lives; but when the ultimate has been achieved in that direction, the sixteen hours a day a worker spends away from his job will still be the thing he works for.

By the time a thousand, five thousand, or a hundred thousand people have settled in a community, it is no longer possible to say that they are there only to earn their livelihoods. The community then becomes a total way of life, good or bad. It is affected by the job, and the job is affected by the community; but the job is only one element. Anyone who ignores that fact misses the principal

point of community living, and so will have difficulty in understanding community attitudes toward new developments of any kind.

### HOW THE COMMUNITY PASSES JUDGMENT

We have said before that every human institution exists by sufferance of the public. In granting sufferance to institutions for continued or expanded operation in a community, the people of the community are guided by two considerations. They will consider what the project will do to their welfare, and whether the sponsors deserve the favor. The sponsors must pass two tests: the project must appear to be in the best interest of the majority of the community, and the sponsors must have the reputation of operating in the public welfare so that they may be expected to do the same with this project.

Such a reputation, or the lack of it, often depends upon one's record of participation with fellow citizens on community projects rather than upon any direct business dealings with them. The reason why that is true is found in an elementary principle of human relations: people like to be considered important in all their relationships and in all their aspirations. They resent being snubbed or held in contempt. Yet a snub can be just as strong without being intended personally. The man who says, "I'm not interested in your community project," is saying, "I'm not interested in you."

Conversely, good will is won by showing some recognition of the importance of the other man's problems. By pitching in and helping him with his undertakings, we show that he is important to us.

The Opinion Research Corporation has tested this fact quantitatively in a survey and summarized the public's attitude toward industry's community responsibilities as follows:

To satisfy the community, a company must do more than hire people and pay wages: people look at a company as a social as well as an economic unit. A median average of 70 per cent of the people ques-

tioned felt that a company has additional responsibilities to the community. It should, of course, support local charities—the Red Cross, the Community Chest, hospitals and other worthy philanthropies. It should, says the public, help boost, advertise and build up the city. It should beautify its plant and surroundings and should help keep the city clean by eliminating smoke, bad smells, etc., as far as possible.<sup>1</sup>

### CONFLICTING DRIVES

The community motivation of people is affected by two conflicting drives: the desire for self-betterment, and the desire for security. People are intrigued by the new, but are loath to give up the old or to risk the unknown.

The comforting security of the familiar is so strong that it often outweighs the desire for civic betterment, if betterment means change.

### CHANGE

The individual resistance to change crystallizes into community conservatism in most older communities which have gone for a generation without drastic changes. It is especially noticeable in smaller cities that have remained static in size and character for a generation or more. A small town which has grown slowly, if at all, and has been largely self-contained, with stable employment for its own population, develops its own personality, which is likely to be conservative in attitude toward new business or new industries.

Such a town has few new people, and the ones it gets come a few at a time so that they are easily absorbed. There are as many jobs as there are people, and there are few layoffs. There are few night shifts, no smoke, no excessive noise.

Then comes a new industry, employing half as many people as the entire previous population. It has to import most of its labor because there is no excess available locally.

What happens? New people come with no interest in maintaining the town as it was, parents working night shifts so that children

<sup>1</sup> The Public Opinion Index for Industry, *op. cit.*

are left alone or unsupervised at night to roam the streets. Children cannot play noisily at home in the daytime, thus they wander on the streets. There are not enough schools or playgrounds now for the increased number, therefore both new and old receive less attention at school and have no place to play after school.

Resentment arises among the old residents against the new, whom they consider a "bad influence," a health problem, or police problem.

If additional facilities have to be provided at public expense, there is resentment from the older taxpayers unless they are shown that new assessed valuations will provide the needed taxes.

Since migrant workers aren't always good citizens until they get roots down into a town, they often give cause for resentment by the original residents; but because the migrants are also human, they also react to any display of resentment and return bitterness for bitterness.

#### ESTABLISHING IN A NEW COMMUNITY

When a new business opens its doors in a community, it also opens the door to a chain of obligations that extends far beyond the business of buying or selling, manufacturing or distributing. Along with the obligation of being a good credit risk—paying its bills, paying its taxes—it assumes the obligation to be a good citizen and a good neighbor.

Along with his obligation to his bank, to his customers, and to his creditors, the operator of a new business has an obligation to the community in which he has established himself and to the people who were there before he arrived.

Whether he acknowledges the duty or not, the community expects, and has a right to expect, that he will hold up his end of the burden of preserving the kind of life that the people of the community want.

In dealing with communities, it must be remembered that not everyone wants new industries. Not everyone wants expansion of



business or growth of population. Not everyone wants what is commonly known as "progress."

Many people are satisfied with the community as it is; others may want it changed but have their own ideas of what the changes should be. Some people want new stores, new theaters, new services, for their own convenience. Others want none of these but want new factory payrolls to provide more customers for the retail outlets already established.

When any new enterprise starts operations in a town, it thus starts with a minority of the population favoring it, another minority opposing it, and the majority withholding judgment—prepared to judge it on the basis of what it does after it starts.

It is to that majority, particularly, that a new enterprise must prove itself. It must prove that it is not damaging the community, and that it is benefiting the community, by its own existence; it must prove that it will help the community on projects others undertake.

To be sure, communities make organized drives to secure new industries and new payrolls. From the pressure that is applied to persuade them to come, the industries might judge that they were doing the community a favor, and to a degree they are; but the favor is not an unmixed one and does not entirely absolve the new establishment of responsibilities.

New payrolls increase the volume of business, and hence the profits, of retailers, wholesalers, service enterprises, and all others who enter into the economic stream. Outside the economic realm, however, the net effect of a new payroll may be damaging.

The contribution that the new industry makes to the economic life of the community may benefit only a minority of its residents. For the majority it may subtract something from the sum total of living in the community.

Much, if not all, of the damage done by an industry to a small community can be remedied; but it can be remedied only at the

cost of organized effort. In that effort the industry has a major responsibility.

Assume that the new plant employs 1,000 workers. If the area has had stable employment conditions before, the new plant will add a minimum of 6,000 to the local population. That means more children attending the local schools; it means more automobiles using local streets and filling up available parking space. It means more cases of scarlet fever, measles, and other diseases to which the population of the community will be exposed.

Translated into terms of how the previous residents of the community will be affected, it means something like this:

Unless and until steps are taken to increase the community's facilities, the size of classes in the local schools might be increased from 25 pupils, for instance, to 30, 35, or 40. The amount of personal attention given each pupil by the teacher would be reduced accordingly by 20, 40, or 60 per cent.

The local playground, formerly large enough to accommodate everyone who sought to use it, has now become so crowded that everyone waits an hour to get an hour's use of the tennis courts and other facilities.

The public library, where the best books were always available within a few days' time, now has long waiting lists for every popular volume.

And so on through the list of services developed by the community to serve its needs. Deficiencies of the type mentioned above can be corrected—but only if someone does something about it. The industry that has made it necessary has two choices: either to wait until public pressure in the community demands action—in which case the industry will probably be subjected to much unfavorable comment and will lose public support—or to take the initiative in helping the community to supplement its services. The methods by which a company can exercise its leadership, with maximum results for the community and for the company's own good will, will be

discussed in later chapters; but it is important that the obligation to help be recognized.

Not all the effects of a new payroll are as simple and mathematical as adding one building and ten teachers to the school system, or adding three tennis courts to the playground system. Some of the effects are more subtle, but change the entire character of a community. The example of a small western town, which had been essentially agricultural until one of the great airlines established its major repair shops there, is typical.

Up to that time there had been little night-shift employment, little employment of women. Home life followed generally the pattern of the pioneer community, with the entire family gathered around the table for two, and usually three, meals a day.

But now, suddenly, a large percentage of the families in town have night-shift workers and working mothers. Many of them are new families; many are old families whose members are attracted by the high wages. Their family life is completely changed, and with it the feeling of security that it formerly offered, to the children especially.

And it is not only the families with workers in the airline shops that feel the change. The unsupervised children of the night-shift workers, drifting into mischief and delinquency, soon draw other children into their orbit. Delinquency has large elements of contagion. Adult members of this community have shared in the effects of the dislocation. Family breakups and adult crimes have also increased.

The airline, in this case, has recognized its own responsibility for these results and has accepted the burden of trying to do something about it, through assistance to local community chest, social welfare, and related programs.

It is easier to measure the effects of one new payroll of 1,000 workers on a town of 5,000 population than to measure the effects of the twentieth such unit on a city of 100,000, but the effects are no less certainly stamped on the face of the larger city.

Because the problems created by bigness cannot be traced to any one business firm in a many-industry city as readily as they can to the one industry in a one-industry town, each business executive is less ready to accept responsibility for doing anything about them. In the familiar pattern, "What is everybody's business becomes nobody's business." Only when the cost of neglect becomes apparent do the more farseeing decide that it is worth their while to assume leadership and prod others into lending a hand.

### TELLING THE STORY

Part of the problem created by bigness is a problem of understanding. Even when no damage has been done, conservative local people may fear that it has; or when new benefits have accrued to the community, the community may not appreciate it.

So one of the jobs of the new or expanding corporation is to tell its story—to inform the community and keep it informed on the value of the company to the community. More and more companies have realized this and have been marshaling their facts in order to combat arguments that big companies are detrimental to community welfare. Some examples of these educational efforts will be examined in Chapter XIII.

### MUTUAL DEPENDENCE

Any company that operates a business in a community expects much of that community and rightly demands it. It not only expects the standard, obvious things that an industry requires for the location of a branch plant: spur tracks, availability of power and water, etc. It expects much more. It expects stores to furnish service, schools to be open, service shops to operate, street cars or buses to run, and all the other facilities that are necessary to the serving of the plant and its personnel.

When a plant proposes to shut down or move away, therefore, it has many lives to consider besides those of its own employees that have been built around it. There is no legal obligation, and possibly

no moral obligation, to maintain any fixed level of operation or employment. But thoughtful executives will not ignore the interest of those who build their lives around a company.

### HUMAN VALUES

While it has come to be recognized that those who work for you invest a part of their lives in you, it has not been so generally recognized that the tradespeople who serve you, and those who serve those who work for you, make the same kind of investment.

If the milkman, without warning, failed to show up with the morning milk, any customer would be justly furious. The rule should work both ways. But if an executive, by his decision to close a plant, suddenly removes all the customers from that milkman, that has too often been considered just one of the hazards of the business.

From the standpoint of financial liability, that is true; but as a matter of human relations, it is brutally thoughtless and can't fail to be resented by everyone who is affected by it.

When a large payroll pulls out of a community, a grocery store closes up, a barbershop, a restaurant. A drugstore lays off part of its help, a garage, a service station, and a few others do the same. Merchants have accounts they cannot collect from people who are thrown out of work.

The plant has left the community; but if the company is continuing to operate anywhere, it does not escape from the ill will it leaves behind.

### WHEN A PLANT SHUTS DOWN

That is not to say that a plant which has proved unprofitable should necessarily be kept in operation at a loss, if its closing will improve the company's financial position. But it is to say that many steps should be taken before the plant closes.

First, every possible avenue of keeping it open should be explored—preferably in co-operation with local leaders. A survey of

local factors affecting the plant may reveal many things that local people can do to improve the situation to make it more profitable—as has been done in hundreds of cases in many communities.

Second, if after such a survey the decision still must be to close the plant, the people of the community should be given the longest possible warning so that they may have time to prepare themselves for the shock.

Third, the reasons why the closing is necessary should be explained fully to the community. This is made much easier if community leaders have worked with company officials, as suggested above, in an effort to keep the plant open and have seen clearly why it is impossible. All other local channels should be employed, however, to get the same facts to everyone in town.

Fourth, the company should study thoroughly what its leaving will do to each element of the local economy and to individuals involved, and make a conscientious effort to help everyone involved to adjust to the change. In some cases workers can be transferred to other plant cities, to make sure at least that they will not be left unemployed and a burden on the community; in other cases small stores and service establishments might be assisted in relocating, if they wanted to do so, in a more profitable place; in still other cases the company might be instrumental in getting a new industry to take its place in the community, so that there would be a minimum of disruption of other economic factors.

A neighborly good citizen never moves out of a rented or sold house without sweeping the floor, disposing of the garbage, paying all bills, returning all borrowed articles, and saying good-by to next-door neighbors. A company that wants to leave the reputation of having been a good citizen and neighbor should do no less.

PART TWO

APPROACHES TO THE SOLUTION  
WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT





## 8.

### *Where to Start—Adopting A Policy*

ASSUME that everyone is agreed that community relations are important; that every business executive should do his share to participate in community affairs. Then what? Where does the executive start?

Like a man starting a trip, he may have a wide choice of possible routes—depending on where he is and where he wants to go. We can furnish a road map and some rules of the road—but he must plan the trip for himself.

And he *must* plan it if he wants it to be successful. A community-relations program should be what the name implies: a program, carefully thought out as to purpose, methods, timing, and all other details. As with a trip, it may be fun to start without knowing or caring where you are going or whether you will even get there—but if you have a real objective in mind, you will save time and energy and you will make your final arrival more certain if you plan and prepare before starting.

Specific starting points and alternate routes will be suggested here, but these are not as important as the attitude with which they are approached. Given the right attitude toward the community, opportunities to practice it will be forthcoming in a never-ending stream.

To be well thought of by the community, one must think well of the community and must show it.

Step 1 is not to *do* something, but to *decide* something—to adopt a basic policy by which everything thereafter will be measured and tested. Until a basic policy is adopted—until it is decided that the community is important, that good community relations are worth making some effort for—no specific efforts will accomplish lasting results; while once the policy is sincerely adopted, specific ways to apply it become easy to find.

The basic policy should have three parts: (a) a negative, or “don’t,” part; (b) a passive, or minimum, part; and (c) a positive, or aggressive, part. It should be decided

- a. that nothing will be done, knowingly, that is harmful to the community nor, so far as avoidable, that is unpleasant or unwelcome to the community;
- b. that everything within reason that is requested by or for the community will be granted, and that certain other minimum steps will be taken to establish acquaintance and contact with the community, and
- c. that a positive effort will be made to seek new and additional ways in which to benefit the community and to identify the company as a good citizen, a good neighbor, and an asset to the community.

The “negative” and “passive” parts (a) and (b) of the policy are stated first, because unless they are adopted and practiced the positive, aggressive activities called for in part (c) will be of little value. Any good that might be done by a constructive, imaginative project could be completely undone by violating any of the “don’ts” that will be listed later in this chapter under part (a) or in Chapter IX; and the full value of such a project will not be realized unless certain minimum things have been done, to be itemized later as part (b). Once those fundamentals are taken care of, then great extra profit, community-wise, can come from such projects as will be suggested under part (c) and discussed with specific examples later.

In short, while the plus values of profitable community relations come from the positive, aggressive programs, these extra dividends cannot be expected if the basic essentials have been neglected; and reasonably successful relations can be achieved without elaborate positive programs if the essentials of parts (a) and (b) are thoughtfully observed.

To be effective, the policy must not be an idle resolution but a working rule of action. It should have equal standing with any other company policy in testing any company decision. Along with deciding "will this speed production?" "will this decrease costs?" "will this improve the product?" "will this increase profits?" the question should be asked, "will this help or hurt the community?"

Step 2 is to make it a major responsibility of a top executive to see that the policy and the program to execute it are carried out. If the community is, as we have said, a service arm of the business, an extension of the business plant, then it deserves the continuing attention of an executive with authority, just like any other department of the business. More will be said later (Chapter XX) about the place of the responsible executive in this respect.

Step 3 is for the responsible executive to analyze the community—its character and traditions, its needs and desires, its assets and opportunities, its organizations and its facilities—and to analyze his company's policies, personnel, and practices in relation to the community. The factors to be considered in these planning analyses will be developed in Chapters IX to XI.

Step 4 is to prepare a program for the company, based upon this analysis and setting forth the things it should do immediately, the things it should undertake later, and the things it should study further. Examples of such programs will be presented in Chapters XII to XIX.

Step 5 is to see that the program is put into effect—and to see that Steps 1 to 5 are prosecuted continuously and unendingly.

These five steps may be remembered by thinking of them as the

five P's of community relations: Policy, Personnel, Planning, Program, and Prosecution.

### DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES

The formulation of definite written policies on any phase of public relations, let alone on community relations, is still a relatively new practice among business firms. Company manuals of policy and procedure for employees are not new, but have only recently come into wide general use; and only the newest of these seem to have recognized relations with the public generally, or with the community specifically, as an employee concern to be included in a manual of policy and procedural instructions.

A study of employee handbooks made in 1942 by the National Industrial Conference Board observed the trend toward humanizing of employee handbooks; but even so recent a study failed to reveal any concern with community relations or any other phase of public relations. A sample outline of a manual, based upon the best practice at that time, omits any reference to public relations.

A more recent study by this writer, however, showed the beginnings of a new trend. Of 100 manuals and handbooks, all issued between 1942 and 1946, 11 covered some phase of public relations—the company's responsibility to the public, the company's dependence upon public good will, or the part played by the employer in building good will.

Only three of these 100 manuals dealt specifically with community relations, but these were all published in 1944 or later, and there is indication that as later manuals appear more and more of them will recognize this field.

A further evidence of the recency of this trend appears in one of the leading harvester manufacturers. This company has been issuing handbooks to employees for several years, but it was only in 1944 that a section was added, for the first time, devoted to the special problems of and policies for branch houses. It was in that new section, too, that the manual for the first time recognized that

the company, through its branch house, "is an integral part of the community. . . . It pays taxes in the community . . . buys many items from local firms . . . carries its accounts with local banks . . . employees are citizens . . . its payroll provides business for local merchants . . . and supports local property values. It prospers through furthering the prosperity of the community."

The importance of setting up these community-relations objectives in definite policies, rather than leaving them to chance, has been pointed out recently by several leaders in the field. Fred Jolly of the Community Relations Division of Caterpillar Tractor Company, in a magazine article discussing plant-city advertising, is quoted as saying: "A well-defined policy and one in which management is genuinely sincere is a must. Without it, plant-city advertising would lack honesty and employees and the community would not accept it."<sup>1</sup>

In the same article in *Industrial Marketing*, the head of Lyon Metal Products Company indicates that the company had made community relations a matter of company policy from the beginning. He is quoted as follows: "Such a policy has been in operation for forty-five years in Lyon. . . . Fundamentally, it is public relations at the community level. It is the procedure around which all other related activities are built.

"The people of Lyon Metal Products make friends by being friendly. They earn credit for employee and community consciousness and responsibility by living the policies as handed down by top management."

One of the most complete policy statements of community relationship is found in the manual of one of the nation's largest food chains. Until a few years ago this company was under legislative and economic attack from consumers, farmers, labor, and competitors for policies which were considered unfair and destructive. Under enlightened public-relations guidance it has won in-

<sup>1</sup>D. D. McMahon, "Lyon Metal Products: Where Public Relations Is Practiced at the Community Level." *Industrial Marketing*, January 1, 1946.

creasing understanding from all segments of the public, and the instructions given to its employees in its latest manual may explain much of the progress it has made.

Starting with the first section of this manual—on advertising—and running through to the last section—on real estate—it lays down the principle of supporting local enterprise in the communities where the company operates.

Supplies are to be bought in the town where they are to be used; substantial bank balances are to be maintained in local banks; local applicants for employment are to be given preference; stores, plants, and warehouses are to be locally owned, designed by local architects, and built by local contractors, then leased to the company with purchase clause protecting the owner against loss through sudden vacating. In selling a property, the company prefers to have the property purchased by an investor living in the area where the property is located. As evidence of this desire, all properties are listed, for a limited period, only in the area where the property is situated.

The company is to be identified with the community, both in its business dealings with private concerns and in its participation in civic, charitable, and other nonprofit movements.

It is declared to be company policy to co-operate in the promotion of neighborhood events with churches, parent-teacher groups, and others. Store managers are instructed to display advertising of such events in a conspicuous place in store windows.

Special emphasis is placed by this company on active participation in local organizations such as chambers of commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and other service clubs. (The company assumes all expenses connected with membership in such organizations, in order that employees not be put to any personal expense.) To make sure that this phase of company policy is not neglected, district managers are made responsible for seeing that the company is satisfactorily represented in each organization and that those designated attend regularly and take an active part. It is, further-

more, made one of the major duties of supervisors to make sure that this program is carried out in all districts under their supervision.

Similar provision is made in this manual for a policy on donations to local causes, for which a regular budget is to be set up. It is the declared policy that local officials shall personally deliver the donations, in order to maintain the local personal touch.

Specific provision is made even for the use of store facilities for collection of funds for special causes. The company's policy, and the necessary limitations on it, are carefully explained in the manual, which points out that "since the Company is essentially a service institution, whose function is to serve the public efficiently and impartially, it is necessary to follow a policy of permitting only such privileges as may be important from the standpoint of the public as a whole." Efforts along this line are, therefore, confined to well-established nonpartisan and nonsectarian drives such as Community Chest and Red Cross, to requests made specifically by federal or state governments, and to "local affairs involving the welfare of neighborhoods in which we have stores and in which a substantial number of our customers have an interest."

None of these activities is unique or different from the practices of hundreds of other companies. What is unusual is that they are made a matter of written policy and not left to chance or the whims of changing personnel. Many other companies that are currently practicing good community relations are doing so because of the interest of a single official rather than because of any well-established and clearly defined policy. Unless this official is the head of his firm and sets the pace for all of the others, his good practices may be offset by bad practices elsewhere in the company. In any case, when he leaves and is replaced, his policies may disappear with him if nothing has been done to perpetuate them.

Hence it usually will be found that such a program will be better understood, more consistently followed, and more continuously maintained if it is made a part of the written policy of the institu-

tion, to be studied by each new person coming into the organization or rising into new positions of responsibility.

When we speak of writing something into "the policy" of a company or institution, we may mean writing it in one place, or in a hundred documents, depending upon the size and complexity of the organization. In a small firm, its entire written policy might be contained in the written instructions of the proprietor to his employees. On the other hand, the employee manuals described above would, in any large company, be only one outward manifestation of decisions made and recorded in many internal councils of the company. Major policy decisions may be made by the board of directors and permanently recorded in the board's minutes; they may then be relayed through the organization in written instructions from the top executive to department heads, from department heads to superintendents, foremen, division managers, and so on down. In companies which have operating manuals for each department and division, in addition to a central executive-office manual, the policy instructions may take the form of additions, or amendments, to these manuals.

While department, division, branch, and other executives can expand the policy in matters affecting their own fields, the pattern will be set largely by what is declared as policy by the top authority of the company. It is reasonable to expect that any of the subordinate operating manuals will tend to contain policies that will be specific applications of the general company policies. So it is important that the policies handed down from the top cover fully the matter of community relations.

Setting up policies does not, however, mean laying down rigid instructions and leaving no room for individual judgment and initiative. That would be as bad in the field of community relations as in any other phase of company operations, and it may be assumed that the distinction between basic policy and operational instructions would be the same in any phase of good administration: policy should be broad and designed to point general directions toward ultimate goals; a large degree of authority and



discretion should be handed on to each successive level of administration, to interpret these policies into more and more specific operational instructions. Even the last link in this chain of authority, the most localized supervisory employee, must be left with sufficient authority to make final decisions as to the extent of participation in community activities.

It should be the responsibility of one person at top-management level to review all such decisions from time to time, to see that they conform to the general pattern laid out in the general policy statement; but that one executive cannot make the day-to-day decisions. For him to attempt to do so would defeat the very purpose of the community-relations program, which is to make each unit of the company an integral part of the community where it is located. That purpose cannot be realized unless there is flexibility enough to meet the special problems of each community, and it cannot be realized if the community is going to be reminded constantly of the "foreign" nature of a company that has to refer every decision to the head office. The initial policy statement is necessary only to point the way and to insure some uniformity of action throughout the organization.

A good example of such a policy statement, and of the mechanics by which it progressed through the company, was a letter from the president of Caterpillar Tractor Company, enunciating the desire of the company to have its employees take a personal, active part in civic activities. The letter was addressed only to department heads, instructing them in turn to "see to it that their supervisory group be advised of this company viewpoint." By the time each department head reproduced this statement and transmitted it, with his own instructions, to the supervisors in his department, it had reached some 1200 supervisors. The letter read as follows:

It is becoming increasingly desirable and important that the people of "Caterpillar" take part in worth-while civic activities. Favorable community opinion is best formed through the personal contacts of interested employees taking part in community affairs. While it is the job of members of the Community Relations Division to actively par-

ticipate in local matters, it is neither possible nor desirable for the Division to undertake even a major portion of such contacts.

Certain employees have natural abilities and interests in the work of such organizations as School and Park Boards, local governments, Boy Scouts, Community Fund, Red Cross, Associations of Commerce, Junior Chambers of Commerce, technical societies, and in other groups established for welfare or cultural purposes.

It is the desire of this Company that all employees having such inclinations be encouraged in these civic affairs. While most of the time required for these activities comes outside the regular work periods, there may be occasions when an employee will need and request time off from work to attend a meeting or to care for some other obligation in connection with this civic work. No general rule can be laid down for the handling of such requests, it being best to leave this decision to the supervisor concerned.

It is, however, desirable that each supervisor, when learning of the interest of an employee in worth-while civic matters, counsel with him concerning possible absences from work. Requests for such absences should be made where possible well in advance and be given favorable consideration if not too numerous. However, the final decision in each case is the supervisor's.

The purpose of this communication is to inform all those concerned of the Company's desire that "Caterpillar" employees handle their share of these civic duties and in every way possible demonstrate our wish to be good members of the community. Will each department head please see to it that their supervisory group be advised of this Company viewpoint?

Note such words as "no general rule can be laid down," "best to leave this decision to the supervisor concerned," "the final decision in each case is the supervisor's." The letter points the direction of policy; the supervisors who interpret management thinking will make the detailed operational decisions.

As suggested above, the basic policy should have three parts: (a) a negative, or "don't," part; (b) a passive, or minimum, part; and (c) a positive, or aggressive, part. While the content of each of these parts, and the form in which they are stated, must vary with the circumstances of each institution, a few suggestions may now be made to illustrate what might be covered.

## 9.

### *Content of Policy—Negative, or “Don’t,” Policies*

Just as individuals may have habits that irritate their neighbors, so many companies have practices that irritate and annoy an entire community. Because the annoyance makes a stronger emotional impression than other contacts, citizens tend to associate the company in their minds with those annoyances; and yet many of the worst irritants can be controlled.

So the first part of the policy should be a series of firm resolutions to eliminate and to avoid such irritating practices. A few of the more typical possibilities are presented here as a check list, against which every company should check its practices and its policy decisions. They are stated in the negative—not because community relations should be approached negatively or repressively, but because the healthy growth of positive action will not have a chance unless these weeds in the garden of community relations are rooted out first:

*Don’t* allow deliveries (either by your trucks at other places or by others at your door), to block sidewalks or streets.

*Don’t* conduct any other customary, repeated operation in a way that will block or hoard sidewalk or street space.

*Don’t* make deliveries in congested traffic areas during peak traffic hours if there is any possible way of avoiding them.

- Don't park trucks at awkward angles or in awkward locations if thought and study can devise a less-obstructive practice.
- Don't permit employees to monopolize the curb space in front of your business to park their own cars. (Discourage going out periodically to move cars in order to avoid tags.)
- Don't permit discourteous or reckless driving of company trucks, cars, or other vehicles. (Discourage discourteous remarks by company drivers even when others are at fault.)
- Don't damage streets by taking heavy equipment over them.
- Don't cause excessive noise. Avoid unnecessary whistles, bells, or other loud noises, especially at night.
- Don't let company premises be unsightly. Don't leave buildings unpainted, vacant lots untended, weeds, trash piles, or other eyesores. Don't let store fronts or building fronts become run down.
- Don't fail to provide sidewalks if in an area where owners provide the walks and where the neighbors have done so.
- Don't destroy or damage landmarks or beauty spots of the community, such as large old trees, to make room for buildings. Try to build around them and capitalize on their preservation as a contribution to the community.
- Don't block a scenic view in which the community takes pride by erecting buildings or signs if thoughtful planning will avoid having to place the buildings or signs in that position.
- Don't allow stacks or exhausts to discharge smoke, fumes, dust, or odors close to residential, shopping, or recreation areas.
- Don't pollute streams by industrial or other wastes.
- Don't destroy fish life, interfere with fish migrations, or otherwise damage recreational assets of the community by damming streams and failing to provide protection for fish and game resources.
- Don't import new workers in large numbers without proper attention to their integration into the community—without adequate preparation for housing, schools, playgrounds, eating places, etc.
- Don't post negative, unfriendly "Keep Out," "Keep off the Grass," or similar signs around building and grounds. If restrictions are necessary, state them in friendly terms to win public understanding—"Our Lawn Is Yours to Enjoy. Help Us to Keep It Green by Walking on Pathways"; but be sure the restrictions are necessary—don't drive people away needlessly.
- Don't dismiss older workers callously, without provision for retirement pay; throwing the burden of support on the community

causes resentment among friends, neighbors, and citizens generally.

*Don't* have heavy seasonal layoffs; while primarily a labor-relations problem, they affect the entire community.

*Don't* neglect families widowed or orphaned by a company disaster.

*Don't* be content to rest with satisfying legal obligations, but give personal attention to working out any personal problems.

*Don't* pay local bills, wages, or salaries of local employees, or other local transactions, with checks drawn on outside banks.

*Don't* buy supplies from out-of-town sources that can be bought just as advantageously from local merchants.

*Don't* operate commercial enterprises that compete with local merchants if satisfactory arrangements can be made for local enterprise to supply the need (restaurants, stores, etc.).

*Don't* always import executives from outside for all good promotions.

*Don't* fail to hire some local personnel for key jobs, as well as for rank-and-file jobs in which local personnel should be given preference.

*Don't* disregard the effect of your wage scales and labor policies on the labor relations of the community.

*Don't* require decisions on local matters to be referred to the home office—and above all, don't use the home office as an excuse or alibi to local people when a favorable decision is delayed or refused.

*Don't* try to grab credit for community campaigns or projects if others have participated with you. Even if you have done more than the others, let the others boast about your good work.

*Don't* make sudden moves that will depress local property values or otherwise damage local interests if prior consultation with local groups would help to cushion the shock.<sup>1</sup>

Any alert company, sensitive to its community relations, can add to this check list from its own experience and observation. A check list can never be all-inclusive. New situations will arise that cannot be anticipated. Those situations present the real test. They make it important to understand and to apply the spirit as well as the letter of good community relations.

<sup>1</sup> See "Making Your Plant a Good Neighbor." *Modern Industry*, April 15, 1946.

That spirit can be summed up in one last "don't":

*Don't* do anything, if it can be avoided, that will damage the community, injure or irritate its people, offend its traditions or customs, or otherwise show disregard for the well-being or good will of the community.

With the understanding that a check list is only a reminder—not a magic formula—the habit of checking this list should become firmly established in every company's procedure. Just as carefully as a company checks its bank balance to see if it can afford an expenditure, or checks with its attorneys to see if a proposed action is properly in line with the law, it should check with its public-relations department to see whether a proposed plan is good public relations. In such checking, this check list of community relations "don'ts" should be an integral part.

## 10.

### *Content of Policy (Continued)— Passive, or Minimum, Policies*

IN ADDITION to those things that the community expects everyone to avoid, there are certain minimum things that the community expects everyone to do.

In the rule presented in Chapter VII (page 50), we stated that those who make themselves a part of the community, show their concern for the community's welfare, give a hand on community problems, make a positive contribution to the community's welfare rather than taking something out and putting nothing back, will tend to reap the benefits, while those who fail to do these things will suffer the penalties that the community can dispense.

The community expects these things as a minimum. So the policy of every company should include provision for doing at least these minimum things when the opportunity or demand is presented. Later we shall consider how a company can go beyond mere passive compliance with what the community demands and expects; but first it is important to understand what is included in these minimum demands.

#### COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS THROUGH ORGANIZATIONS

Basically, a community functions through organizations. It renders its community services, it accomplishes its community

purposes, and promotes its aims largely through them. Organizations, by their existence and nature, are evidences of a group decision to act on a group purpose; if they are community organizations, they are evidences that the community has agreed on common objectives that are important to at least a large segment of the community. Organizations are the focal point of community responsibility. To exist and accomplish anything, they require personal effort, financial support, and thoughtful leadership.

The extent to which each one delivers his share will be the measurement, in the community's eyes, of the extent of his "making himself a part of the community," "showing concern for the community's welfare," "giving a hand on community problems," and "putting something back to repay what he takes out." One of the primary places where this shows up is in the field of social welfare.

### SOCIAL WELFARE

In the field of social welfare, health and recreation, there will be either a Community Chest, a Council of Social Agencies, or at least the separate organizations that often band together in a chest or council—boy scouts, girl scouts, child-care agencies, family-service centers, foster-home programs, welfare agencies, hospitals, clinics, and other health services, recreation, character building, and many other agencies meeting community needs. The local chapter of the Red Cross, with its responsibilities for the national organization, is another in this field. Churches and their affiliated activities vary in the extent to which they look to the community generally for assistance or for participation in any form. But each person and each group is likely to be called upon at some time to give some kind of help to one of these movements with religious sponsorship, and when that happens it must be considered in the same light as the community-wide enterprises.



## CIVIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Next in prominence to welfare agencies are the civic-commercial groups. In the fields of civic development, business service, and community promotion there are chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, convention bureaus, tourist promotion and community advertising agencies, better business bureaus, governmental research bureaus, traffic bureaus, and other services, often combined in the chambers of commerce but sometimes found with one or another of these services operated separately.

## CELEBRATIONS, CONCERTS, AND EVENTS

In related fields there may be associations sponsoring community celebrations and annual events—harvest festivals, blossom festivals, rodeos, centennials, and the like—to commemorate or advertise some notable feature of the community or its history. Opera, symphony, and music associations are similar expressions of community desires.

## BASIS OF APPRAISING

All of these organizations, in varying degrees, need and will expect the same things: funds, personal effort, and leadership. Each must be appraised objectively as to its worthiness, the propriety of the firm's assisting it, relative merits among many worthy needs, and the firm's total ability to furnish money and manpower to all community needs. But any refusal of support or any reduction below what is requested must be based fairly upon one of those four factors and not upon indifference or refusal to recognize responsibility to the community.

Even in making only a minimum response to community appeals, the manner of the response can be as important as the quantity of assistance given. Going beyond minimum response, of course, some of the most imaginative and effective examples of good community relations are found in the realm of co-operation

with community, civic, and welfare organizations; but those examples will be examined later in this book. Our concern here is with how best to do those things that are expected uniformly of everyone.

### ESTABLISHING COMPANY POLICY

With such a variety of community organizations as exists today, the allocating of funds and personnel among them becomes a problem. The only way to be at all sure of doing it fairly and equitably is to plan the allocation ahead of time. That is why it is important to make this participation a matter of official company policy and procedure rather than to leave it to chance.

The first question is the handling of donations of money. A recent study by the National Industrial Conference Board indicates that most corporations recognize their financial responsibilities in regard to local charities—more than 90 per cent of the corporations studied reported that in their decisions to contribute they were guided by the share they had in community burdens. But they differed in the manner in which the requests for contributions were handled.

One of the largest American corporations, for instance, reported that all local contributions except nominal ones are approved by the head office before they are made. A more progressive practice, in the opinion of this writer, was that reported by several manufacturers, chain stores, and others, which delegate to local managers a large measure of authority over local contributions.

### RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

The best practice, combining local responsibility with sound business control, is to allow the local manager to prepare an annual budget covering all major demands, plus an unallocated contingent amount to be available for use at the local manager's discretion for minor or unforeseeable requests. Here again, in considering such budgets for approvals, head offices vary in their principles of ap-

proach. Most of those that have any provision for such budgets say that the amounts they allocate to each branch are weighed "in the light of contributions made in other plant towns." While this factor should, of course, be considered, there is a danger of giving it too much weight and defeating in each town one of the very purposes of the contributions.

Since the aim of all community-relations effort is to make the business as much a part of the community as possible and to reduce to a minimum any reminder of its outside ownership, the aim in measuring contributions should be to make the amount of each contribution as nearly as possible what it would be if the local plant were entirely locally owned. Because the local needs and special problems, sometimes created by the business itself, may be entirely out of proportion to payroll, investment, or any other factor of comparison, the contribution of the branch office should be in step with the tempo of the local community rather than arbitrarily fixed by any formula set up by a head office remote from the actual scene.

#### VALUE OF ACTING EARLY

Approval of a budget ahead of time will make it possible to capitalize to the maximum on the public-relations value of the donation, and to avoid some of the major "don'ts" in this field. If the full value of community appreciation is to be derived, the donation must not be given grudgingly or under pressure. Hence it must be ready to be given early. Many firms are able to arrange for a full spread of publicity by having their donations featured as the first in the campaign. Then newspaper photographers can be on hand to take pictures of the presentation by the local managers, and all the other news featuring that goes with the lead-off position can be attached to this donation. Even when publicity may, for some reason, not be desired, all the other advantages of local appreciation can be gained. Local campaign committees are always grateful for early pledges that can be used as leverage on more

reluctant donors; and if the early donation is not given publicity in the press, it will still get extensive word-of-mouth praise among the organization leaders.

National corporations with local branches are always vulnerable to the accusation that their absentee owners are interested only in what they can take out of the community. While contributions to community, civic, and welfare causes are one of the best ways to combat that charge, wrong handling of the contribution can do as much damage as no contribution at all. If the subscription is resisted or delayed, so that any doubt is created as to the company's intention to contribute, the same kind of criticism and negative comment can start to circulate; then, when the subscription is finally made, those who criticized will not necessarily recant. They will, in fact, often believe that the contribution was made unwillingly and only when pressure was brought to bear.

#### THE ABSENTEE-OWNER, HOME-OFFICE BUGABOO

One of the major "don'ts" enters into this picture here. Don't under any circumstances give as the excuse for delay that "we have to clear this request through the home office." There is no more common excuse, unless it be its corollary, "if we gave here we would have to do it everywhere that we have an office," or "you know, we have to contribute in so many places—if we increased here, we would have to increase everywhere."

We have stressed repeatedly that the people of a community tend to be prejudiced against "outside" or "foreign" corporations. Surveys and opinion polls have confirmed this in community after community; and while the surveys often have shown that the prejudice was based upon ignorance, it is none the less a handicap in seeking to gain good standing in the community. So one of the goals of good community relations is to eliminate or to minimize any symptoms of outsidersness or foreignness; to make the company so completely a part of the community, so identified with the community, that the question of being an outsider will not even

arise. That goal can hardly be realized when "home office" is thrown in the face of community leaders as an excuse for not helping a local cause.

### ONE COMPANY'S ATTITUDE

The director of public information of General Foods Corporation has stressed the importance of this whole local approach to contributions in these words:

As for the method or technique of giving plant-wise, from the standpoint of public relations I think it is important that the plant manager be allowed to draw the check in the name of the local plant in order to impress on the local charity or charities the fact that it is the plant, rather than the corporate management that is in reality giving the contribution. If the full benefit is to be derived from corporate giving this technique is most advisable.

The philosophy behind local contributions in communities where companies operate is a simple one. When the company operates in a community it is only fitting and fair that it enter wholeheartedly into the life of that community. Just as it partakes of the benefits which that community provides in the form of health and traffic facilities, the availability of labor, law abiding nature of its citizens, then, so should it contribute to the community's needs whether they be for more hospital space, a health center, or any one of a number of similar enterprises.

By carefully weighing the requests for aid that come to a company from a plant community, a corporation can help overcome or at least offset certain problems inherent in absentee ownership. It can win the confidence of the community in which it operates by giving wisely and generously. Its interest in local charities reflects real concern for the welfare of the community that is in reality serving it and producing profits for stockholders who live elsewhere and have no particular interest in that community. It is playing the part of a good citizen by carrying its share of the burden of charity.

If a plant does not contribute to the local charities, it often loses the respect not only of the citizens there, but of some of its own employees. Employee morale is raised by the charitable-mindedness of the plant. It may be said to decline noticeably with the plant's indifference.

## MANNER OF GIVING

The manner of giving is often as important as the amount given. We have already discussed some of the "don'ts" as far as mechanics and procedures are concerned; but the subject should not be left without a word about the personal, human element—not just the "manner," but the "manners."

Solicitors for any community cause should always be received with the utmost courtesy. They should be treated, not as if you were helping them, but as if they were helping you—which in fact they are. If they are treated with pained toleration and condescension, you undo much of the good that your check will do.

As one executive has pointed out: "It is shortsighted to ignore the humanizing values which lie in proper handling of corporate donations. They can give warmth and life to the cold synthetic corporate body."

## EMPLOYEE GIVING

Contribution by the company itself is only half of the problem of financial support. The other half is help in soliciting funds from company employees. This is a delicate problem, but it must be faced; its delicacy and potential explosiveness cannot be avoided by looking the other way. For the company must help if it does not want to displease the community, and it must help wisely if it does not want to antagonize the employees. Without some interest and guidance from the company, fund drives among employees often bog down and fail; but if the company guidance takes the form of pressure upon employees to contribute, it is likely to boomerang and cause ill will between the company and the employees.

The best employee drives have been those planned, directed, and executed by employees themselves, below the management or supervisory level, so that no coercion is present or implied. Management can help by enlisting the first few employee volunteers to head the drive, by consulting and advising with those leaders on

their organization plans, by allowing solicitations to be made on company time—and, above all, by giving the campaign all possible publicity and advertising within the plant and employee circles.

The Studebaker Corporation, for example, organized its local welfare campaigns in South Bend with the active participation of the labor union in the plant. Once a reasonable quota has been established for the corporation and its employees—a quota closely related to the company's employment status in the community—an independent in-plant campaign is organized in collaboration with the union. This campaign is so designed as to complete the job as quickly as possible; for example, when the Red Cross campaign has run as long as a month, the Studebaker in-plant drive has been completed in less than a week and its quotas have been exceeded.<sup>1</sup>

#### MATCHING OF EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS

Some companies match employee contributions, on the ground that the company should support those charities in which employees are interested and that employee contributions are an adequate measure of this interest. A large manufacturing company has found a variation of this method successful. This company bases its own gifts on assessed valuation and property taxes, but includes a qualification that if employee contributions fail to equal company contributions, notice will be sent to the fund that it must make its work apparent to the employees or the company will be forced to reduce its contribution.<sup>2</sup>

#### ATTITUDE IS BASIC

There are infinite possible variations of these methods, but what is more basic than method is attitude. If management is determined to help, determined to encourage employees, but de-

<sup>1</sup> From a letter, April 12, 1945, from Gaston E. Marque, Director of Public Relations.

<sup>2</sup> From National Industrial Conference Board. Studies in Business Policy, No. 20, *Industry's Community Relations*.

terminated not to coerce employees, then methods can be worked out with the employees themselves that will serve the triple purpose of raising needed funds, winning good will in the community, and winning friendly relations with employees.

### BUDGETING MANPOWER

Money, of course, is only part of the problem. Civic, charitable, and other local efforts need manpower as well as money, and they must look to business firms to supply it. They need manpower to do the routine "pick and shovel" jobs—soliciting, campaigning, handling meeting arrangements, and the dozens of other jobs of unsung heroism—and they need leaders to do the planning and directing. The finest talent at each level and in each specialty will be found in the large modern corporation; in organization and administration particularly the personnel of the large companies will have something to offer to local efforts that may be found nowhere else in the community. If that talent is withheld, or if manpower assistance at any level is denied, the company will be giving less than it can, just as if it had withheld financial support, and will be considered unfriendly or indifferent to community needs.

So a "budget" of manpower to participate in community affairs should be set up, too, as far as possible. It too should be planned in advance, so that it can be equitably allocated between the various community needs, so that the load can be fairly distributed between departments if possible, and so that this community work can be fitted into the normal operating schedule and taken in stride.

Such advance planning also makes it possible to decide on some rational basis how much time and how many persons should be put into community work. Obviously there are limits, with personal time as with money, and no one company can be expected to carry a disproportionate load. If care and thought are given, a program of participation can be worked out that will be in proportion to others in the community; and at the same time a pro-



gram can be developed that will not exhaust the manpower budget on the first few calls for help and leave only refusals and irritation for the others.

### SPREADING THE LOAD

In spreading the load of community activity there is an opportunity to multiply the number of effective contacts with the community. This point will be stressed again in Chapter XX, in connection with the responsibility of the public-relations director or counselor, but it is well to think of it here. The job of working on community projects should not be centered in any one person or any small group, but should be spread as widely as possible. True, some one person might, and should, be made responsible for planning assignments to various efforts, but he should not himself be the principal emissary. The more individual representatives of the company can be placed in community affairs, the more symbols of the company can be identified with community interest. But because community participation, like all public relations, is a two-way communication system, spreading the load has another value: the more separate persons are involved in community affairs, the more will become educated on the community and its needs, will acquire a community viewpoint, and will bring their viewpoints to bear upon company policies that might affect the community.

There is a hen-and-egg relationship in this process; in order to behave and perform like a good neighbor, most people need to feel like one; and nothing makes people feel like a good neighbor so much as doing a neighborly act. So, to make as many company officers and employees as possible act and feel like good citizens, the best way to start is to get them to work on community undertakings where they can feel that they are making a contribution.

The degree to which company employees respond to requests for participation in community affairs will be determined in part by the attitude management takes toward this participation. In

this, as in every phase of human relations in business, top management always sets the pace and shapes the pattern of the entire organization. Where management frankly encourages such community activities, the employee is more willing to assume responsibility. Many companies have found it worth while to allow employees to take time off with pay for special civic work. Many go to considerable lengths in paying dues, meal costs, and other expenses for such participation. Other companies support their employees in this work by assisting them in preparation of speeches, special studies, lending of company equipment, and otherwise making company facilities available.

### CREDIT GRABBING

One point conveyed in the "don'ts" in the preceding chapter deserves repetition here in connection with participation in or leadership of community campaigns and projects. That is the matter of credit grabbing or boasting about the participation. *Don't do it!* Credit for such service usually comes without seeking it, but the one sure way not to get credit is to boast about oneself. Even at the risk of getting no recognition at all, it should not be sought by self-praise, which will only destroy the good will that might come from the service itself. Others who feel that they have done their part will be quick to resent any efforts to grab the spotlight.

It is another application of the principle stated earlier, that "community work is a good business getter, if you don't try to use it that way." It is also a good credit getter, if you don't try to use it that way.

It is a safe rule in any human relationship, but especially applicable here: Let others boast about your virtues and good works.

### THE FINE ART OF LETTING GO

Just as important as accepting a community responsibility is the willingness to relinquish it at the end of a reasonable term. To fail to do so is in the same class with credit grabbing, hogging the

limelight, or any other form of monopolizing public attention. It can undo much of the good that has been done by the community service.

For the sake of any community civic organization, as well as for the individuals leading it, rotation in office is a wholesome practice; perennial officers tend to become ingrown and ultraconservative, and they begin to have all the accumulated resentments of the several years concentrated against them and the organization. Company leaders interested in the welfare of their communities will encourage rotation in any civic organizations of which they are a part; but they particularly will refuse to allow themselves to continue too long in office.

The better job a businessman does in a community service position, the more important it becomes for him to be resolute in refusing to be perpetuated in office. If he has done well, he is sure to be told so and to be urged to continue; he will be told that no one else could possibly do as well—until he begins to believe it. He feels that glow of successful achievement, he doesn't want to let his friends down—and just incidentally he's afraid that next year will seem awfully dull without the excitement and public recognition. That is just the time to beware—to resist temptation and say No. There are no indispensable men, just as there are no men without value.

## 11.

### *Content of Policy (Continued)— Positive, or Aggressive, Policies*

WHILE the steps outlined in the preceding chapter will create some good will in the community, they are aimed principally at avoiding ill will. They are the steps which, if not taken, will cause irritation and adverse comment but which, if taken, may produce only a neutral state of no comment at all. Skill and imagination in complying with some of these minimum requirements can generate a great volume of good will and good conversation; but by and large the positive good will and actively favorable standing will depend upon more positive steps, planned and executed on the company's own initiative. There will be no pressure from the community to take them; few if any people in the community will even know that there are any such things that might be done. So the only penalty for not doing them is a blank—a failure to take advantage of an opportunity.

As limitless as the bounds of imagination are the possibilities in this "positive" category. So the suggestions made here can be only that—suggestive of fields in which those with imagination can go far beyond what has been done before.

The best examples of positive programs fall into eight principal categories, with many subclassifications under those. They will be

listed only by title now, to be examined one by one in more detail in the next eight chapters.

## SOME FIELDS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR POSITIVE PROGRAMS OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- I. *To Get Acquainted with the Community*
  - A. Organize plant tours and visits—by groups:
    1. Families of employees
    2. Clubs and organizations
    3. Schools
    4. Clergy, educators, labor leaders, etc.
    5. Press
    6. Other select groups
  - B. Hold "Open House Days" for entire community.
  - C. Have regular visiting hours for "drop-in" visitors.
  - D. Call on city, county, and school officials and civic leaders.
  - E. Attend meetings of City Council.
  - F. Attend Chamber of Commerce and other community meetings.
  - G. Belong to local service clubs and attend their meetings.
  - H. When top company officials come to town, arrange for local leaders to meet them.
  - I. Maintain a card index of names and addresses of public officials and officers of all local organizations.
- II. *To Keep the Community Informed*
  - A. Indirectly—through employees—make use of:
    1. Employee newspapers, bulletins, and publications
    2. Bulletin boards
    3. Employee meetings
    4. Letters to employees' homes
    5. Dissemination through foremen and supervisors
    6. Pay-envelope inserts
  - B. Directly—make use of:
    1. Local press and radio, by supplying news and giving service
    2. Mailings to community leaders of annual reports, employee newspapers, house organs, company booklets, and special publications
    3. Advertising in local papers and media

4. Speakers before local clubs, organizations, and other meetings
5. Motion pictures telling company story, shown to business clubs, schools, women's organizations
6. Educational and historical exhibits
7. Dedication ceremonies on opening of new plant facilities
8. Award ceremonies, honoring employees for outstanding service and tying in community representatives

### III. To Help Local Causes and Organizations

- A. Lend company facilities for organization meetings, programs, and activities.
- B. Use showroom windows, sides of trucks, and advertising space to promote community drives.
- C. Assist 4-H, Future Farmers, boy scouts, etc., by preparing educational literature, sponsoring a local unit, or otherwise.
- D. Offer contest prizes and awards to youth organizations.
- E. Make company property available for community picnics and outings, youth camps, etc.
- F. Prepare program manuals, guides, and literature for service clubs, women's clubs, and other community organizations.
- G. Participate in local fairs, etc.
- H. Observe local holidays.
- I. Specialized helps to local causes and organizations.

### IV. To Help Schools and Colleges

- A. Prepare special educational materials and technical curricula based upon company's field of operation:
  1. Art displays
  2. Music
  3. Science
  4. Films
  5. Other graphic aids
- B. Lend equipment for special technical studies.
- C. Invite classes to visit and study plant operations.
- D. Send technical experts to lecture at classes.
- E. Sponsor a college scholarship in some selected field, preferably one related to community resources or problems.
- F. Offer annual prizes for local school competition, either athletic, scholastic, literary, artistic, or musical.
- G. Provide employment opportunities for students.

- H. Offer future employment possibilities for graduates.
- I. Assist in adult-education programs along similar lines.
- J. Essential element of school-relations programs.
- V. *To Help in City Beautification and Improvement*
  - A. Beautify own plant.
  - B. Establish policy on local construction.
  - C. Sponsor "Face-Lifting" campaign for community.
  - D. Sponsor tree-planting program.
  - E. Sponsor a "Better Home Town" program for the community.
  - F. Assign technical experts to studies and recommendations on improved planning of streets, parks, playgrounds, schools, housing, etc.
  - G. Celebrate company anniversary by some service or contribution to the community's benefit.
  - H. Sponsor the preservation of a community historical or scenic landmark.
- VI. *To Help in Community Promotion*
  - A. Make research studies on some phase of industrial or commercial potentialities of the region.
  - B. Supply manpower and money.
  - C. Assist in entertaining visitors to the community and in "selling" them on its advantages.
  - D. Run company ads telling the advantages and attractions of the community for industry, for tourists, or whatever the community is seeking to promote.
  - E. Prepare exhibit materials that community-promotion agencies may use in their selling efforts.
  - F. Feature the community in booklets, decorations, and displays.
- VII. *To Help Agriculture in the Community and Locality*
  - A. Sponsor improved livestock breeds.
  - B. Organize surplus-crop-disposal programs.
  - C. Conduct research in utilization of agricultural wastes and products.
  - D. Conduct research on methods of combating crop damage by frost, by pests, by disease.
  - E. Make studies on fire prevention and protection on farms.
  - F. Make studies on profitable methods of increasing crop yields.
  - G. Help community organizations set up agricultural programs.
  - H. Develop sustained-yield programs.

### VIII. To Help Local Government

- A. Help to modernize fiscal, accounting, billing, and other procedures.
- B. Co-operate in studies of improved construction, surfacing, and maintenance of streets and highways.
- C. Co-operate in studies of transportation methods.
- D. Conduct research into methods of garbage disposal, sewage disposal, etc.
- E. Co-operate in staggered-hours programs and other means of relieving traffic problems.
- F. Co-operate with health department in studies of diet, nutrition, sanitation, and other health measures.
- G. Serve on local boards and commissions.



## 12.

### *Getting Acquainted with the Community*

THE foundation stone of human relations, upon which all else must be built, is friendly acquaintance.

The steps by which a company gets acquainted with its community are not materially different from the ways in which a person gets acquainted with any of his neighbors. The companies that have been successful in their community relations have approached it in that spirit.

Here are some examples of the successful methods that have been used by leading companies in America to become better acquainted in the plant communities.

#### PLANT TOURS AND VISITS

If the aim of the company is to be a friendly neighbor, what are the things that a friendly neighbor does? One of them is to invite the neighbors in for a visit. That basic principle works equally well with the neighbors of a company. They, too, should be invited in for a visit.

The planning and handling of these plant visits and tours will be examined in considerable detail, for several reasons: they are among the most valuable opportunities for community contact; they are the most universally available, to all types and sizes of

business; and they are one activity in which minute planning of every detail will pay the largest dividends.

There are many ways in which to handle these visits; each way has its advantages for special purposes, and some companies have used all of them successfully at one time or another. They all can be used by the same company in combination, by thoughtful scheduling.

The only essential difference between any of these types of visits is the manner in which the visitors are grouped: whether they come by selected, specially invited groups, by general community-wide invitation, or singly on their own initiative. However they come to visit, there are the same rules to be observed, which will be discussed later. First let us consider how we shall go about inviting our neighbors to visit us.

*By Groups.* Most of the people in a community are affiliated with some kind of group, and sooner or later that group should be invited to make a special visit. Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Exchange, and the other service clubs, women's clubs, parent-teacher groups, farm organizations, trade associations, professional societies, boys' clubs, girls' clubs, fraternal organizations, veterans' groups, city and county officials, and every other group in town can be invited to make a special occasion of a visit to the plant. Every school class can be invited to make an educational tour of the plant.

*Family Visits.* Of all these groups, the most important are the families of the company's own employees. They have a natural curiosity about the place where their loved ones are working, and feel that they have a right to know about it. To convert that curiosity into a feeling of common interest should be one of the first goals of community relations, and a personal visit and inspection of the plant is the first step toward the goal.

Such companies as Servel Company at Evansville, Indiana, Caterpillar Tractor Company at Peoria, and Menasco Manufacturing Company at Los Angeles conduct regular programs of family visits to their plants which have been highly successful.

Depending upon the size and nature of the plant operation, these visits may take several forms: a Family Day for the families of all the workers, and their friends, making virtually a community Open House, but on an invitational, organized basis; or a series of smaller visits, by departments, by alphabetical sections, or by some other grouping. Where the operation permits, it has been found especially effective to let the employees act as guides to their own families and friends. The element of possessive pride involved in such a personally conducted demonstration is obvious and is worth trying to achieve.

The company-wide Family Day may be developed to include entertainment programs, shows, sports, events, picnics, and other features, as some companies have done; but it will usually be found better to keep these other features separate and let the plant visit stand out as a memorable event in itself.

*Other Groups.* Service clubs, women's clubs, trade associations, and similar community organizations form an ideal grouping through which to invite community people to visit the plant. Many of them are constantly looking for program ideas to hold the interest and attendance of their members; and all of them will welcome opportunities to give their members something unusual as an extra dividend.

A meal served in an unusual setting adds to the interest of such a group visit, and so Caterpillar and other companies have had these organizations as guests for luncheon or dinner after a tour of the plant. Clubs that have a fixed schedule and requirement of regular meetings hold their formal meeting and conduct their official business at the plant luncheon or dinner; as their speaker they have a company official, possibly supplemented by a new company film.

United Air Lines has made use of the unique facilities of an airline to entertain visiting groups; other airlines probably have done the same. After a tour of the company's shops, control towers, dispatching, communication, and other operations, the visitors are

taken to the company dining room, where they are served the same meal, by the same stewardesses, that the company's passengers would receive as meals aloft. The meals are served in the same compact trays that are used in the air.

Caterpillar has expressed a preference for taking smaller groups so that everyone present might get acquainted with company executives and with each other. That, of course, serves a double community-relations purpose. It helps to unify the community as well as to draw it closer to the company. In these smaller groups Caterpillar has played host to some 300 men and women a year. More than 50 of the 189 ministers in the community have been guests; so have schoolteachers, labor leaders, members of service clubs, farm organizations, veterans', and other organizations.

*Correcting Misunderstandings.* These small group visits have given Caterpillar an opportunity to correct misunderstandings as well as to make friends.

One day, for instance, a stranger phoned the company to say that at a party he had heard a woman say that Caterpillar had cut down the size of the hamburgers served in the company restaurant and had made more than \$100,000 last year by charging employees too much for skimpy meals. The Company's community-relations manager thanked him for calling and asked if he would like to get in touch with the lady and a few others—make up a small group—and go out to Caterpillar and have lunch with him. The caller said he would try. Within a few days they arrived at the plant. After lunch the community-relations manager, Mr. Fletcher, introduced them to the restaurant manager, and said:

"Pearl, there's some talk that you've cut down the size of the servings here, particularly hamburgers, and that Caterpillar made a \$100,000 profit from the restaurant. Is there anything to it?"

Pearl said: "No, indeed, Mr. Fletcher. We have the same-sized servings now that we always had. Our hamburgers are all six-ounce servings. Last year the restaurant spent \$100,000 more than it took in."

Then one of the visitors asked: "You mean that the company lost \$100,000 feeding its workers last year?"

"We don't think of it as a loss," Pearl said. "But rather as an investment in employees' health and satisfaction. No doubt you eat well at home, preferring that to dissatisfaction and doctor bills."<sup>1</sup>

So the rumor that the cafeteria was skimping was spiked.

Then, there was the farmer who called Mr. Fletcher.

"You may not remember me," he said, "but I met you a couple of years ago when I was a member of that industry-agricultural conference group. I'm calling to tell you what a neighbor of mine has just told me." He went on to say that his neighbor (the farmer lived about fifteen miles north of Peoria) had said that Caterpillar was opposed to the completion of the new North Side Bridge because it would permit workers living to the north of it to drive directly into the city, instead of first having to drive south and pass by the plant on their way to town. The rumor said the company was afraid of losing some of its employees to other industries nearer home. Further, that Caterpillar had kicked about using so much steel to finish a bridge when steel was scarce.

Again Mr. Fletcher invited the farmer to ask his neighbor—and a few others who might be interested—to make a visit to the plant. In about a week five of them were sitting at a luncheon table with Mr. Fletcher. Not much was said about the bridge until the party had left the dining room and returned to Mr. Fletcher's office. There they got out the correspondence file relative to the bridge. It showed that the company favored the early completion of the bridge and had, in fact, urged all officials concerned—the governor and state, federal, county, and city officials—to do everything in their power to help in any way possible to speed the work on the bridge.

<sup>1</sup> Donn Layne, "Firm With Home-town Pride." *Nation's Business*, March, 1946.

As the group was leaving, one of the men pulled out a large roll of paper and handed it to Mr. Fletcher. It was a petition to finish the bridge—with 500 names on it. If it could be of any help, the company was welcome to it, he said. The man also apologized for saying that Caterpillar had been against the bridge.

"False rumors are so easy for people to start," remarked Mr. Fletcher, "and they can hurt individual and corporation alike; but when either have friends—honest friends—rumors seldom get a chance to snowball into alarming proportions."<sup>2</sup>

*School Visits.* The possibilities and the values of school visits to the plant are almost limitless. At each school level, from elementary school on through high school and into college, a plant tour lends itself well to some phase of instruction. From commercial geography, economics, and all the social sciences on through the manual arts to engineering, mechanics, physics, chemistry—all find some practical demonstration in one plant or another. As pointed out in later sections, special teaching materials and curricula can be developed by industries, based on their industrial processes; and these can be adapted to plant tours of school pupils and students of different age levels. The souvenirs, refreshments, and other features mentioned later should be developed with especial thought for school classes.

The acquaintance value of contact with school pupils is far-reaching. Not only are they the citizens and community leaders of tomorrow, but even today their dinner-table conversation at home is a powerful builder of public opinion, through its influence on adults.

*Tours for Press.* Tours for members of the local press likewise serve a dual purpose: acquaintance and understanding. Since the local press can play so large a part in interpreting the company to the community, both acquaintance and understanding are essential. Relations with the press will be discussed in a later section; all that is suggested at this point is that plant visits with the press

<sup>2</sup>Donn Layne, *op. cit.*

be carefully planned so as to allow full opportunity to develop both the acquaintance and the understanding.

With this in mind, provision should be made for refreshments and for a luncheon or dinner at the end of the tour, where press representatives and company officials may meet in a friendly and informal setting. During the tour and the later gathering, thought should be given to providing both printed materials and personal escort that will answer the particular questions in each newspaperman's field of interest—financial, industrial, commercial, mechanical, or otherwise technical, as well as the questions in the fields of human relations and possible feature-story material. At the same time each press representative, whatever his special interests, should have an opportunity to see the importance of the company's operation to the community. That community importance can usually be directly related to the editor or reporter's special interests—to the financial editor, the income the company brings in to the community; to the sports editor, the value of the company's recreation program, its leadership in community sports leagues; and so on for each field.

#### ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

An annual Open House day or week, to which everyone in town is invited, has its own advantages and disadvantages. It does not offer the same opportunity for close personal contact, and hence does not provide the same basis for personal acquaintance, as the smaller invitational visits do. But, on the credit side, it makes it possible to bring an infinitely greater number of local people into some personal contact with the company and its plant. Servel Company at Evansville, for example, has played host to as many as 15,000 people in a year, including those attending the annual Open House.

United States Steel Corporation decided after the war to resume its open-house programs at eight of its eastern steelmaking and fabricating plants. There was some fear in operating departments

that the distractions caused by mass visitors would cause a production letdown. Instead, after 100,000 neighbors had visited these plants, new production records were hung up. Many workers, touring the plant in their leisure time or with their families, saw for the first time how their own and other workers' operations mesh. That always helps workers' morale.

The Open House, of course, emphasizes the idea of the community being welcome, which is good. While it would be preferable to have each individual person in the community feel that he was personally close to the company, that is never entirely possible in a large community; so the next best thing is to make each person feel that as a part of the community he is important to the company and welcome to its plant.

The large crowds that will attend an annual Open House do not lend themselves well to the serving of a luncheon or dinner; but for that very reason all the more thought must be given to the courtesies, the thoughtfulness, and the hospitality that can be extended under such circumstances. It will not do simply to open the doors and let people file through. All the special "do's" and "don'ts" listed later in this section, to be observed on any kind of tour, must be observed especially closely with an Open House; and, in addition, special attention must be given to "traffic management." The crowds must be moved along steadily so that everyone will have an equal chance to view everything; and yet there must be no feeling of being herded, hurried, or shoved.

Johnson & Johnson at New Brunswick, New Jersey, has made its Open House a three-week affair and has drawn more than 16,000 visitors in that period. Each of the weeks was planned as a special event: during the first week all the service organizations, clergy, professional groups, schoolteachers, city, county, and state officials, and civic leaders were invited by personal letter; company employees, their families and friends, and the general public were invited by general notice to attend during the second week; the



third week was devoted to stockholders and students from nearby schools and colleges.

In addition to all the other values of Open House programs, Johnson & Johnson officials were impressed by the effect upon employee morale as a result of employee participation and more thorough employee education.<sup>3</sup>

This feeling of participation can start far ahead of the actual day of the Open House and can run all through the planning. While community-relations or public-relations departments will usually have the major responsibility for planning, many companies have done as Menasco did with its Family Day: there a joint committee was appointed from labor and management to design and build displays, decorate the plant, print tickets, rehearse employees for special entertainment skits, and handle dozens of other preparatory details—thus making it really a “family” affair in every sense.

An Open House cannot be successful unless people know about it. That is when publicity, advertising, and showmanship come in. While personal invitations can and should be addressed to key leaders as suggested above, the mass of the population in the community must be reached through mass invitations. All the avenues of communication—press, radio, billboard, window displays, and the rest—should be used to convey the invitation to everyone in town. Some companies, like United States Steel, have used such varied showmanship as circus-elephant displays and tie-in advertising by local merchants.

#### VISITING HOURS FOR “DROP-IN” VISITORS

After everything possible has been done to invite visitors, by groups, by families, or by general community-wide invitation, there still will be many individuals who have not participated in such tours and who will want to see the plant on their own initiative. New arrivals in town, older residents who were unable to attend

<sup>3</sup>H. K. Eaton, “‘Open House’—Public Relations Tool.” *Public Relations Journal*, July, 1949.

when invited, previous visitors who want to show the plant to out-of-town guests—any of these may become “drop-in” visitors at any moment, and they must be treated with the same courtesy as those who are specifically invited. That does not mean that they can be treated identically, for the drop-ins create special problems.

While it might be more hospitable to be open to visitors twenty-four hours a day, that is not practical in a factory any more than it is in a home; and visitors will understand if they are told in a positive, not a negative, way. Obviously the plant would be less interesting in an off shift, when some operations might not be running, so we invite them to come when it is in full blast. If they came while workers were going on or off shift, the bucking of traffic would be confusing and irritating to everyone concerned; so we invite them to come in midmorning and midafternoon when they can go around with the greatest ease and comfort.

Whether a plant is open to visitors every day, or only on certain days of the week, is a matter that each plant must decide. There should be a good reason, however, for any days when visitors are not allowed—when “it is not possible to take visitors through the plant”—the plant is shut down, it is cleanup day, machines are being overhauled, production lines are being switched over to a new run, etc. The reason should be advertised in posters placed about the plant and in the reception room, with an invitation to visit at some other time.

Whenever possible, visitors who have to be denied access to the plant should be offered an alternative. If there is a permanent exhibit, a display of company products, or a photograph display of the plant and its operations, signs can say: “While the Plant Is Temporarily Closed, You Are Invited to Visit Our Exhibit Adjoining the Company Offices,” etc. If a friend appears at the front door while the painters are at work in the living room, the hospitable housewife doesn’t say: “You can’t come in now—go away!” She probably says: “the front of the house is a mess—won’t you

come around to the side porch" (or to the garden or terrace or wherever they can sit). Then she probably adds: "I hope you'll come back next week and see the house after the painters have finished." The same spirit should prevail at the plant.

### PLANNING THE TOUR

Up to now we have been considering mostly the question of how and why the visitors have come to the plant; now it is time to consider what is to happen after they get there. While the people of the community should be made to feel welcome at all times, it is not enough to tear down the "Keep Out" signs and replace them with "Visitors Welcome." Having visitors in a large industrial plant—or in a small one—is no minor undertaking. If it is to be successful and enjoyable, it requires thought and planning on the part of the host. Like any other entertaining, it can appear effortless, and the host can appear to enjoy having guests, only if every little detail has been thought of and attended to before the guests arrive.

Whether the company is playing host to the entire community or to a selected group or to individual drop-in visitors, the essentials of good planning remain the same. Time schedules may be different; it may be possible to entertain a small group more extensively than a large one; but the necessity of having a schedule and of planning every detail remains unchanged.

Here are a few tested rules, along with a few suggestions, for the planning of successful plant tours:

1. Time the tour and each part of it beforehand. Know just how much ground can be covered on a "Long Tour" and on an "Abridged Version." Know just how much time is required for an adequate explanation of each feature, for average questions, and for movement between stops.
2. Make a realistic time schedule for each tour, based on this knowledge of time required and time available—then stick to the schedule!

3. Be sure that invited visitors know the person for whom to ask when they arrive. If that person is not the tour manager, he can, in turn, introduce the tour manager.
4. Provide a comfortable place for visiting groups to assemble, where instructions can be given to an entire group without disturbing plant or office workers. Visitors should be shown a place to leave hats, coats, and other impedimenta. Many companies provide a pencil and note pad to assist visitors in note taking along the tour—a valuable aid to them in relaying observations to others after the tour is over.
5. Plan the tour so it tells a complete story. It must start somewhere and give a connected picture of a process as it proceeds from beginning to end. Some companies take as their starting point the place where the business began, if it has grown from smaller beginnings. Sometimes a scale model of the original plant helps in this introduction. Others start at the raw material level and proceed logically through the process.
6. Have a plan that can be followed through without backtracking, indecision, or apology.
7. Point out improvements in processes, with resulting improvements in quality, savings in costs, reduction in price, etc., as the tour progresses.
8. Point out improvements in working conditions for employees—such as better lighting, ventilation, safety, sanitation, rest rooms, lunchrooms, etc.
9. Emphasize what is unique. Remember that every factory has raw materials, machines, conveyor lines, power plants, laboratories, and warehouses with products in them. What is there about these things that makes your factory different?
10. If research and development are a feature of the plant, show how they work to develop an improved product.
11. If the quality of raw materials is a factor, or if the packaging, packing, and shipping of the finished product shows the care with which a customer's order is handled, then those features should be stressed.
12. Be sure that the running story told to visitors along the way includes clear evidence of the value of the plant to the community. This can be woven interestingly into the other features of the story—as the operation itself is in fact woven into the community—rather than dragged in by the heels as a special-pleading speech. Raw material or equipment purchased in the community can be

pointed out as it is passed; the number of local people employed, the total payroll, and the local buying it produces can be brought in in discussing the size of the plant; the distant parts of the world to which the community's name is carried, in connection with the sales of the product; the wholesome effect on community health, when inspecting the athletic and recreational facilities; and so on.

13. Do not trust to chance that the employees assigned to act as guides will know what to do and say at every point. Conduct one or more training sessions and supply each guide with a written manual or outline. The same instruction should be given to those attending booths, displays, and other features.
14. Signs in each department describing the operations there are sometimes helpful supplements to the oral comments of the guide.
15. Effective use has been made of a continuous strip of red ribbon or gauze, with directional arrows, strung along the entire route of the tour.
16. To cover long distances, one company has set up bleacher seats on a flatcar train and towed it through the plant with loud speakers attached to each car.
17. Allow for a rest stop midway along the tour, or more frequently on a long tour. Provide places to sit down. The rest will give visitors an opportunity to catch up on their notes if they wish; guides can summarize the trip up to that point and explain what is ahead.
18. Consider providing refreshments somewhere along the way. Some tours may end with luncheon in the company cafeteria or lunchroom. Otherwise a "Coke" or other light drink will taste mighty good to people who have been walking for an hour or two. It can be served as the party visits the cafeteria, or out of the same dispenser that the workmen use, or as the party assembles for its final greetings. Depending upon the crowd that is being entertained, and upon company policy, more elaborate refreshments may at times be provided; but a cooling soft drink should be the minimum of hospitality. The cost? At a nickel or a dime multiplied by any number that might visit the plant, what could you do so cheaply to complete the good impression?
19. If there is a showroom in the plant where the entire line of finished products is on display, it may be the best place to end the tour. In any case be sure to have a pleasant end point where the tour can end conclusively—not straggle out with the guests wondering whether it is over or not.

20. An effective conclusion is to have each visitor sign a guest book. One company writes each guest, a year later, recalling the visit as a pleasant occasion. For those who like to carry away a souvenir, an attractive piece of literature embodying the highlights of the tour makes a suitable memento of the visit and one that can be shown to family and friends. A sample of the product, a piece of the raw material which might be used as a paper weight, or some such tangible souvenir will continue to recall the visit.
21. Above all, never consider the tour a perfected routine. Like every other company practice, it should be put under the microscope, not once but periodically, to be sure that it is being kept up to a high standard. Review it in staff meetings; get the newest and best ideas of every executive. And don't stop with the executives; aim to take the entire plant in on the project. Encourage suggestions and invite co-operation all along the line so that everyone who comes in contact with visitors will treat them pleasantly, courteously, and not as curiosities or nuisances. It will pay dividends both ways.
22. Don't undertake a tour program unless you are prepared to do it wholeheartedly and do it well.<sup>4, 5</sup>

#### CALLING ON CITY, COUNTY, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Being acquainted in the community should include knowing the leaders of its local government, its civic bodies, and its other community institutions. And while not even acquaintance, let alone friendship, can be expected to rest upon a single visit, "the longest journey starts with a single step." So acquaintance with these local leaders can start with the step of paying them an introductory call.

If the plant manager is newly arrived in town, he will have the entire galaxy of leaders to call upon in succession; and it may seem like a heavy expenditure of time for a purely social gesture. But in terms of ultimate returns upon the investment the time spent will not be wasted, nor will its results be purely social.

For those trained in the social tradition that "the new neighbors

<sup>4</sup> H. K. Eaton, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> "To hold open house is good public relations—but." *Printers' Ink*, November 1, 1946.

must wait for the older residents to call first," let it be said that that does not necessarily hold true with business and civic calls. While it would make for good community relations if the older business residents would make it a point to call immediately, this has not been done enough to establish any tradition that dictates that it must be done first by those with seniority.

If, however, a new arrival feels any reluctance to "barge in cold," he can easily arrange to be escorted and introduced by someone already established in the community: his departing predecessor, a member of his executive staff, or someone outside his own organization.

Among those who should be so visited are the mayor, city manager, if there is one, county supervisors, commissioner or county executive, superintendent of schools, president and manager of the chamber of commerce, president and executive officer of the community chest, publishers and radio executives, as a minimum. This writer would also include in a minimum list the officers of the local labor council and the heads of any unions with which the company deals. Others may dispute this as labor-relations strategy, but there is no question about its wisdom as good community relations.

All such calls should be brief—a maximum of twenty minutes and an average closer to ten minutes. They need not include more than the introductions, a simple statement that the purpose of the call is to make the acquaintance of the person visited, and an offer to be of assistance on any local undertakings in which help would be welcomed. While no business executive needs to be reminded to be brief, the unusual circumstances of such visits may lead to courteous invitations to remain longer than either party really desires. Better to leave extended conversations to a second visit—and make that second visit seem more welcome to both parties.

After the plant executive is once established in the community, and after he has called upon all the incumbents in the community's posts of leadership, he will see changes take place and new persons

come to occupy those posts. That should be the signal for him to repeat the visit—this time to welcome the newcomer, to wish him well, and to offer him co-operation in his new undertaking.

These visits upon newcomers should not be limited to those holding high office. When a new business opens its doors or a new owner or manager arrives to take over an existing business, nothing would give him a warmer feeling of welcome than to be called upon by the head of one of the community's leading industries. In the mind of that newcomer, at least, that industry would be forevermore identified with the community.

In a larger community, where such changes take place frequently, not all the calls can be made by the top executive. They may have to be divided among several executives; but they should never be considered a minor chore, to be delegated to minor employees. They take only a few minutes—less than one domino game—and their value is in direct proportion to the stature of the person making the call.

#### ATTENDING MEETINGS OF CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER BODIES

After the first social call upon local leaders, then what?

At Peoria, where Caterpillar Tractor Company has its headquarters and its principal plant, each week two of the fifty top men in the company attend the Peoria City Council meetings, to indicate the company's interest in good city government, to listen, and to answer questions. The two executives who attend each week are selected by the community-relations division of the company.

Other companies and organizations have varied this procedure with attendance at meetings of county governing boards, school boards, and the like. In San Francisco, where for many years there had been frequent friction and antagonism between the local government and business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce took steps to correct the situation by arranging for regular attendance by Chamber representatives at the



weekly meetings of the Board of Supervisors. In addition to the staff member who attends every week, one or more volunteer officers and directors attend each week in rotation. Officers of the consolidated city and county government, in turn, are invited to attend the weekly meetings of the Chamber's board of directors. As a result of the increased acquaintance and mutual confidence, there have been more frequent consultation and agreement between the two bodies on problems affecting the community.

Many companies assign an employee to attend all meetings of city councils, county boards, and other local bodies as an observer to report any action that might affect the company and to be prepared to speak when necessary in the company's interest. While such "watchdog" practice is perfectly proper and is desirable for any company that is subject to local government action, it is no substitute for attendance by company principals. In fact, the more the "watchdog" is expected to speak up in meetings, the more important it is that other company representatives appear occasionally with no company axes to grind. For the company's community relations will not profit if it acquires the reputation of being interested only in protecting its own skin.

#### ATTENDING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The same injunctions apply to attendance at chamber of commerce and other community meetings as to those of governmental bodies. While the top executive cannot attend every meeting, he should not delegate the responsibility to an underling. From the standpoint of acquaintance alone, all major executives should from time to time take their turns in attending the meetings where other local citizens will be present. And, from top to bottom, company representatives who attend these meetings should do so in a sense of full participation. Even more than in attending meetings of governing bodies, those who seem to be attending civic meetings

only for what they can take out of them, with no sense of contributing to the meeting or to the projects it plans, will do serious damage to their companies.

#### PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL SERVICE CLUBS AND THEIR MEETINGS

The first of the Four Objects of Rotary International, the oldest of the service clubs, is "to promote acquaintance as an opportunity for service." The other service clubs of business and professional men have similar purposes, however stated, in addition to their many other laudable objectives. No one who has belonged to one of these clubs will deny that they offer one of the best of all opportunities for broadening acquaintance in the community. Most of them seek to include in their membership at least one person from each business and profession in the community; thus they are sure to represent a cross section of the business community at one level or another. Several limit their membership to owners or major executives and seek to have only "the leaders in each business and profession" or "the leader and his competitor." Others aim for the next level of executives—sales managers, department managers, and the like—while still others, like the 20-30 Club, accept only a certain age group but with otherwise the same cross section of businesses and professions. Any company with appropriate executives at each of the levels sought by these clubs will find it well worth the time and expense involved to authorize and support the membership.

All these clubs have a requirement similar to Rotary's "attendance is the price of membership." So no one should join a service club without serious intention of attending and participating fully. And again, the service club is like the community itself: those who are in it, enjoying what it has to offer, are expected to put something back into it and to do their share of the labor necessary to make it function. Service clubs have service projects from which come their name, community service in the form of aid to crippled children, sponsorship of boys' clubs, charitable works of many

kinds. These projects require some personal effort, as well as money, and the club expects each member to give the few minutes that may be needed. The time so spent is not wasted from any standpoint, for oftentimes it is in these projects that members have the greatest opportunity to become acquainted.

#### WHEN HEAD-OFFICE OFFICIALS COME TO TOWN

When head-office officials come to town, there are two schools of thought on what to do with them—or three schools, if we include those who would have them come in and go out without seeing anyone but the local plant executives.

Some companies follow the practice of giving a luncheon, dinner, or reception whenever a top official comes to the branch-office town, so that the local leaders may meet him. He is interviewed by the local press and perhaps billed as a guest speaker before a local luncheon group.

This attracts a great deal of attention, gets publicity, and increases somewhat the local acquaintance with the company. But it also serves to emphasize the “outside” nature and “foreignness” of the company and its control; it reminds local people that the local manager is not really a top-ranking man but just subordinate to some absentee-owning bosses.

Others let the head office-officials come in without fanfare, but see that they call upon such community leaders as suggested on pages 108-110 above. Small informal luncheons serve as a supplement to this method.

While other considerations may dictate the use of the first and more formal method, community-relations motives by themselves would dictate the second.

#### CARD INDEX OF LOCAL LEADERS

The Caterpillar Tractor Company, in its Community Relations Division, maintains a complete card file of the names, addresses, phone numbers, and other pertinent information on the president

and other officials of groups within the community. This information is thus available to anyone in the company upon request.

While such a file is a valuable tool to have, several factors should be considered before starting one within any one company. In the first place it is information which might be of equal value to many others in the community; for that reason many chambers of commerce maintain such a file centrally for the use of the entire community and periodically issue mimeographed directories containing the essential information. Inquiry should be made of the chamber before starting an independent file; and if the chamber does not have one, consideration should be given to encouraging the establishment of such a central file. Whether the chamber or a single company should do the job may depend upon such factors as the number of companies to be served and the size of the chamber.

Whoever does it, it should also be borne in mind that lists become out of date before the ink is dry and must be kept constantly and continuously corrected. One of the larger chambers of commerce in America, which maintains and publishes directories listing 1084 local organizations, keeps one person employed nearly full time keeping the lists up to date. A "tickler" file of organizations, classified by the month in which officers are elected, is the basis. Each month cards are sent to all organizations scheduled for changes in that month asking for the names, addresses, phone numbers, and other data on new officers. Those failing to respond are followed up by telephone. Newspaper are scanned daily for changes, either annual or interim, resulting from deaths, resignations, or replacements. In spite of every such precaution and double check, errors or omissions are hard to avoid: unstaffed volunteer organizations fail to respond to questionnaires, publicity fails to appear in papers, or names are garbled typographically somewhere in transmission and have to be checked against telephone directories or city directories.

Those using a published directory of this sort should note the date of issue. If the directory is many months old and if correct

names of officers are important, those using it should first check back with the issuing agency for corrections.

The practice of many users of such directories, in any field, is to assign to some one employee the responsibility of following the news sources of possible changes—newspapers, trade journals, etc.—and interlining longhand corrections into the file copy in the interim between issues. For most purposes this method is adequate but its limitations should be recognized.

## 13.

### *Keeping the Community Informed*

IF ACQUAINTANCE is the foundation stone of good community relations, information is its next structural beam. The community must "know" and must "know about" a company or an institution of any kind. What was said above about the natural curiosity of employees' families is equally true, in varying degree, of everyone in a community.

Most human beings insist upon having opinions of one kind or another about everything in their communities. If they are not furnished the raw material for the right opinion, they will have the wrong one—about the factories where their friends work, about the stores, banks, and other business firms, about the local government, the schools, the transportation system, utilities, and other services—about everything they see or use that might ever be a topic of a conversation.

So, while information alone will not guarantee proper attitudes of those who might have emotional reasons for prejudices, prejudice can never be removed without information, nor can full understanding be gained even from those without prejudice. The withholding of information not only leaves a vacuum that sucks in distortions of truth; but in the intimate relationship of a community, the very act of withholding tends to create resentment and suspicion.

"If they're so secret about everything, they must have something to hide." Then rumor starts to work.

Once the decision is made to furnish information, the channels for doing it are virtually unlimited in a community. That is one of the reasons why the community is the place to start any public-relations program. The lines of communication fan out endlessly from the community to other segments of the public, and there is no other place where every segment of the public—every "public"—may be so readily reached.

The techniques of disseminating information are so well understood that they already have been made the subject of a vast literature of their own; in fact most of the literature of public relations until recently has been devoted to this one phase of the public-relations field. So we shall not dwell here on those techniques, beyond pointing out their special applications to the community situation and some special problems involved in that connection.

The channels for keeping the community informed fall generally into these categories:

A. *Indirectly—Through Employees.* Just as employees and their families reflect attitudes toward a company more clearly than any other group, so are they the best means for conveying accurate information about the company, its policies, and its operations. And in order to convey accurate information, the employees themselves must have it.

There is ample reason why employees should be fully informed about their company, just for the sake of the effect that information would have upon their own morale. The techniques of informing employees have been ably covered in such books as Alexander R. Heron's volume.<sup>1</sup> While that book was aimed primarily at the problems of industrial and labor relations and is a

<sup>1</sup> Alexander R. Heron, *Sharing Information with Employees*. Stanford, Calif., Stanford University, 1942.

valuable tool for workers in those fields, it has special interest in connection with this aspect of community relations.

Among the methods for informing employees which Heron and others discuss are employee newspapers, monthly publications, and special bulletins; bulletin boards; employee meetings; letters to employees' homes; pay-envelope inserts; and dissemination through foremen and supervisors.

It is assumed, as a part of this process, that most employees take home the printed matter as well as the oral messages that they receive at the plant. By conversation with their families, and finally by conversation with friends outside the home, this information spreads throughout the community.

To make sure that important messages get home to the families, many firms, like Servel, send letters to the homes of their employees occasionally when the subject is considered of vital interest to the employees and their families.

*B. Directly to the Community.* While employees, their families, and their friends are perhaps the best single channel of information, it is an accepted principle in public relations that no one means of communication can be depended upon to reach every segment of the public. For that reason, in addition to this indirect route, we also avail ourselves of the many other direct lines of communication in the community, which overlap in all directions, but which, used in combination, effectively blanket the community. Some are "rifle-shot" selective approaches; others are "shotgun" general coverages.

In applying any of these techniques, however, one special word of caution is in order. It is a warning that applies equally to any type of publicity or public relations, and should be obvious, but seems to be particularly needed in the community-relations field: As people have begun to take an interest in the community and to decide that they should do something about something called "community relations," there has been a tendency to think that this consisted only of informing the community—and that inform-



ing consisted only of bragging. There has been a tendency to say, in paid ads, press releases, mailings, and otherwise: "Look us over, folks, we're good!"

There is nothing new or surprising about this tendency. It seems to be a stage through which people pass in their development of understanding, in any of the fields of public relations, when they think of publicity as the beginning and end of all public relations. Many business executives, when they "discover" the public for the first time and become convinced, after a lifetime of reticence, that the public is entitled to be informed about the business, then swing over to the other extreme and want to bombard the public with information and statements that boast about the company. One extreme can be almost as bad as the other.

As each new "public" is discovered, the process is likely to be repeated—with stockholders, with customers, with employees, with all of the other "publics," and now finally with the community which includes all of them. And for the same reasons that the community is the right place to start with a public-relations program, it is the wrong place to start wrong. The personal contacts are so close between readers of and listeners to company expressions, and the opportunities for cynical comparison of notes is so good, that it is worse than useless to send out material that begets a cynical "oh, yeah?" sort of response.

While the fullest possible use of all the local channels of communication is recommended, they should be used to convey information (a) that the local citizen is entitled to have, because it affects him, or (b) that is interesting to him.

That is only another way of repeating one of the cardinal rules of publicity and of advertising: The message should be written in terms of the reader's interest—not the writer's.

#### LOCAL PRESS AND RADIO

With that injunction in mind, full use should be made of the local press and radio. Of all the direct means of communication

with the community, they are obviously the best way of reaching the largest number of people with some information. They have the advantage of broad coverage, and the disadvantage of being edited. Each paper prints as much of any story as the editor wants to use or has room for. Radio newscasts do the same. It is for that reason that other media are used to convey more complete information, even though to a smaller audience. But because nearly everyone reads a paper and listens to a radio, the importance of these two media cannot be overlooked; and the disadvantage of incompleteness of treatment may be lessened in proportion to the co-operation given to the press.

Such excellent texts have been written on publicity and press relations that little more need be said here than to urge that they be read and followed. But the opportunities for effective personal contact with the press are much greater in a plant community; and these opportunities are balanced—or intensified—by the proportionately greater penalties for failure to give personal, thoughtful attention to the needs and desires of reporters, editors, and publishers.

The techniques and procedures of writing and handling stories may be left to textbooks, but it is worth while to stress the importance of frank, friendly, helpful relations with all representatives of the press and of fair treatment of all papers. Papers in a distant city might be less conscious of any favoritism, but to play favorites with any one paper in the local community is to ask for trouble. Whether the competition is between morning and evening papers, or between two mornings or two evenings, care must be exercised to see that they get equal "breaks," and that in all other respects the things that newspapers traditionally consider their rights are respected.

Equally important with fairness of treatment are openness and helpfulness to the press. While responsibility for press relations should be centered in a trained department, the press should never be denied free access to any executive who might have information

pertinent to a story the paper is trying to develop. Refusal to be seen, like the withholding of facts, only breeds resentment, distrust, and suspicion. If there is a story that might be damaging to the company, the full facts will seldom be as bad as the conjecture and half-truths that may be substituted. Resourceful reporters cannot often be kept from getting a story if they want it, and if they get it in the face of resistance it will usually be given an unfriendly slant; while many potentially unfavorable stories have been played down when honest co-operation has been given to the reporter.

No first-rate public-relations practitioner would try to get stories into the paper on the basis of personal friendship with an editor or reporter. Yet most public-relations men would recognize that the total treatment of an institution in the press, as in the community generally, will be in proportion to the total relationship between the institution and the press; that acquaintance, friendly contact, and general helpfulness will be reflected in space and favorable tone of stories, just as the professional standards and quality of news releases will be reflected.

So in addition to establishing friendly acquaintance with the press, as suggested in an earlier section, it is important to be a helpful source of information for the press. Not only on stories directly affecting the company itself, but on many other types of stories the company may be a fruitful source of background material; at such times no effort should be spared to supply what is wanted. Special departments of the company may be able to answer technical questions in fields of chemistry, physics, electronics, finance, foreign trade, transportation, and many other subjects on which there is no other authoritative source in town. Whether the company is to be quoted or not should make no difference in supplying the information. Becoming known as a helpful source will usually result in the company being mentioned frequently in stories outside its own field but in which it will be identified with the human interest of the reader.

After the establishment of such friendly, co-operative contact,

there will unfold endless opportunities to supply to the press stories that interpret and explain the company, its policies, its problems, and its plans to the entire community.

While the entire field of the publications and media to which news releases should be sent is one of the subjects adequately covered in other texts, one note of emphasis may be in order on the localized and specialized publications that appear in each local community. Larger cities have neighborhood weeklies that correspond to the country weekly of the rural areas and are read regularly in many districts. High-school and college newspapers, service club, trade association, lodge, merchants' association, women's club, and other special-group bulletins—each of these has a small but faithful list of “cover-to-cover” readers. News notes—on company employees affiliated with any of these groups, the high-school graduate who has just been employed, the club member who was promoted, the neighborhood resident who just received a twenty-five-year service award—will be read and will help to identify the company with the community group concerned.

Some companies that have community-relations departments make those departments responsible for clearing all news releases to the local press or radio. In this way they assure that, in addition to factual accuracy, the stories will take into account points of community interest that might otherwise be overlooked.

Several companies with branches in many communities have prepared manuals for the guidance of local managers in dealing with the press. One of the best of these was issued by the public-relations department of the Du Pont Company, which not only has many local branches but has many operating departments that are somewhat autonomous and that have, in turn, many local branches of their own. To these local units such a manual has proven of great value.

#### MAILINGS TO COMMUNITY LEADERS

Because news stories as they appear in the local press cannot be counted upon to be complete enough to tell all the story that the

company wants to get over, other methods have to be used to tell the full story to certain select groups. One of these is mailings to leaders of thought and opinion in the community.

An increasing number of companies and institutions are putting local leaders on their mailing list to receive their annual reports, house organs, company booklets, and special publications. Caterpillar has a mailing list of more than 6,000 local business, labor, education, and church leaders who receive such publications. Some companies include their employee newspapers in their community mailings; but that should be analyzed as to the possible reader interest, as should all mailings.

Local leaders are not the only good channels of dissemination of information, and hence not necessarily the only ones to whom mailings should be sent. The Curtiss-Wright Corporation, for instance, in its community-relations program in Columbus, Ohio, sends its plant newspaper to all barber and beauty shops as well as to the local officials and leaders.

#### ADVERTISING IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Among those companies that have entered into community-relations programs, one of the most fully developed techniques has been the use of institutional advertising in the plant city's newspapers to tell the company's story.

Here again some warning should be sounded before discussing the values. First, advertising should be recognized for what it is—just one of the techniques and tools of community relations, and not the whole of community relations in itself. Some of the companies engaging in the community advertising programs show symptoms of thinking that when they have executed their advertising program they have conducted a complete community-relations program. Second, the same cautions offered above in connection with publicity and press releases should be observed in writing paid ads: the ad copy must not be purely "brag stuff." If carefully planned on those premises, newspaper advertising can be a powerful adjunct to other forms of community relations.

Like the use of direct mail, this method permits the company to tell its own message in its own words without the loss of completeness often suffered through editorial cutting of news-release material.

*Serving a Double Purpose.* One company has used newspaper ads in a way that not only tells the company's story but does some of the community's work at the same time.

The Herman Nelson Corporation of Moline, Illinois, has run a series of full-page advertisements whose purpose was "to impress on the employees of the Company and on the general public that the welfare of the industrial employee and the public were dependent upon the general welfare of local industry" and "to inform the citizens of Moline as to the operations of the Herman Nelson Corporation and indirectly to convince employees that they were taking a part in an enterprise of local value and of national importance."

The advertisements were later reprinted in booklet form and were used as a further medium of public relations in that form, but our concern here is with the original newspaper series and with the message they embodied. When they appeared in the local papers, they were addressed solely to the people of the community.

Of fourteen ads examined in this series, every one carried a primary and a secondary message—the primary one about the community, and the secondary one about the company. The community message, in most cases, did a public-relations job for all industries in the community.

For example, they first traced the flow of money circulating through the community, pointing out that

This community does not grow anything nor does it mine anything. Therefore, practically all the money we spend must come from the sale of products manufactured here and sold throughout the country. Without the progressive local industries which bring in money from all parts of the nation, this community could not continue to prosper.

Only incidentally was it mentioned that the Herman Nelson Corporation brings over five million dollars annually into the community from the sale of its products to customers located elsewhere.

Other ads about the company showed the location of its other plants and offices from coast to coast; the 32 states where stockholders live, with an investment of over \$1,000,000 in Moline; the dollars spent on groceries, rent, clothing, taxes, insurance, and other living costs; the names of local firms from which over \$3,000,000 worth of parts, supplies, and services are bought annually; the neighborhoods in which Nelson Company employees live. One ad pictured the sales engineers of the Company as "Serving Moline Throughout the Nation" because their sales "and those of other progressive local industries" make jobs in Moline and bring millions of dollars back to Moline.

Instead of boasting about the Company's contribution to the community, what is stressed is the benefit of "sales throughout the country" and "investors from Maine to California," not only of that one company, but of other "progressive Moline industries."

The part played by Moline-made equipment in "safeguarding the health of 3,000,000 school children in approximately 70,000 classrooms throughout the nation" is made a matter of community pride—not merely Company pride.

Other ads were used to promote current community projects—public safety, recreation, schools—showing wherever possible the part that local industries play in those projects.

Other companies, such as Northern Wood Products Company, in Holland, Michigan, have also stressed the idea of the company and its products as "ambassadors" and "nationwide calling cards" for the home town.

Lyon Metal Products, Inc., of Aurora, Illinois, is another industrial firm that has made extensive use of plant-city newspaper advertising to keep the community close to the company. With every major expansion or new plan the company has run full-page ads addressed to the community, telling what the new move will

mean to the community in jobs and employment. Typical of these ads was one headed:

WE'RE BETTING A MILLION DOLLARS ON AURORA AND  
CHICAGO HEIGHTS

BECAUSE WE HAVE FAITH IN THE FUTURE OF AMERICA

The ad told of "creating more jobs . . . steady, permanent employment . . ." for the people of this community.

A similar note has been sounded in the ads of Copperweld Steel, Republic Steel, American Viscose, Libbey-Owens-Ford, Canadian Industries, Ltd., Forest Industries of Tacoma, H. P. Townsend Manufacturing Company, and others.

One of the large manufacturers of America whose consistent community-relations work has been reflected in a long record of freedom from labor strife is the R. G. Le Tourneau Company. In discussing the value of maintaining proper plant-city relationships through what he describes as continued "social advertising," the public-relations manager of that company repeats the reminder that such advertising is effective only when coupled with other factors. He emphasizes that it requires a good management and a sound, co-operative internal working relationship to make the newspaper advertising acceptable to the employees and the local citizens.

*The "Bigness" Question.* Many of the larger industries have used newspaper ads to combat arguments that big companies are damaging to the welfare of the community.

Such companies as Shell Oil, Emerson Electric, and Standard Oil (Indiana) have placed ads reciting how the community benefits from the company's size, or from expansion in size: by making more scarce products available, by providing better working conditions and better opportunities to employees, by providing greater total employment in the community, by offering increased orders to suppliers, by fostering small business through the sponsorship of independent dealers and agents, and in many other ways. The oil company ads, for instance, stress the thousands of different



kinds of jobs made possible by the very size and scope of their operations and point out the impetus that their work will give to science, research, and education through the employment of physicists, geologists, librarians, artists, and other kinds of specialists.

*Regional Program.* While plant-city advertising came to be widely used during the war, its use as a peacetime community-relations tool has received considerable impetus from the program developed for a group of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Minnesota newspapers by D. D. McMahon, community-relations specialist retained by Scheerer and Company, newspaper representatives in Chicago. Developed toward the end of the war, when it appeared that revenues from this form of advertising might dwindle, it is nevertheless designed to serve the public interest as well as to generate revenues. Its purposes are, briefly:

To promote better understanding between industry and labor.  
To establish a working relationship between each newspaper and its local manufacturers, and to determine what the community ought to know about each business.

To encourage manufacturers to project their true corporate character into community life via special events, house organs, and plant-city newspaper ads.

To prepare locally adapted advertising copy for manufacturers or other groups, and to assist in preparing brochures and other material for local distribution.

To research and survey matter about the community which can be used by manufacturers to build home-town pride.

The first step in the program was a series of regional clinics sponsored by the newspapers. Manufacturers in surrounding communities were invited to attend as guests of the host papers, and to participate in round-table discussions with representatives of various interested organizations such as the chambers of commerce and trade unions. Follow-up clinics on a local scale were held subsequently in each participating paper's home town.

*Advertising Prerequisites.* The clinics defined the purposes of

the campaigns and outlined ways and means to carry them out. One clinic concluded that public understanding of a firm's plant-city ads could be expected only if the advertiser would first "understand yourself and your business as it relates to the community . . . try to understand others and the stake they have in regard to the same things . . . create conversation and comment by every technique at your disposal as an individual and as a member of a firm, to cultivate mutual understanding."

As a part of this program the agency prepared a series of ads, locally adapted, with art work and layouts, dealing with the problems of each paper's community.

These ads are sponsored and paid for by groups of businesses rather than by individual firms. Examples are the series sponsored by the New Castle Manufacturers in Henry County, Indiana, and that of the Branch County Manufacturers Association in Michigan.

The agency also encourages individual manufacturers to supplement the group program by plant-city advertising of their own, stressing various aspects of company relations with the community. Where the group ads usually have dealt with the importance of corporate organization in providing modern tools and producing a higher standard of living, the individual ads have dealt with the contributions of the individual firm to the welfare of the community, of the employees, and their friends and neighbors. Other ads, either individual or group-sponsored, have been designed to attract new industry, to improve relationships between cities located close together, or to outline the contributions that industry in general has made to the development of a city and the well-being of its citizens.

#### SPEAKERS

Another way to convey information especially directed to a select audience is to furnish speakers for local civic groups, luncheon clubs, women's organizations, and other meetings.

Every company should have at least one person, and larger com-

panies should have many, who can make an interesting talk on the company's activities and plans. With good courses in public speaking so universally available, it should not be beyond the resources of any local company or branch office either to select a good public speaker or to train one from its ranks.

Such a speaker should be made available to all types of local gatherings, including schools, colleges, and churches. Some companies, like Caterpillar, fill as many as ten or twelve engagements in a week. Nearly all organizations with a regular schedule of meetings are hungry for programs and will welcome a good speaker.

Those assigned to speak should be given full co-operation and assistance in gathering and preparing material for talks. For some audiences and for some types of messages, films or slides can be made available to illustrate the talk.

To obtain full value from such speaking engagements, the proposed talk should be reviewed with the officer responsible for the company's community-relations program and prepared with community-relations objectives in mind. A speakers' bureau to correlate these activities can be a useful part of the public relations department.

### MOTION PICTURES

Closely allied in purpose to the furnishing of speakers but with a different set of problems are the preparation and local distribution of motion pictures telling the company story. Such pictures can be offered to the same types of audience that will use a speaker, and to many, such as school audiences, to which speakers would have a limited appeal.

It is that very question of appeal, however, that presents the greatest problem in the use of motion pictures and makes them less flexible and adaptable than a live speaker. In this modern day of portable projectors with sound-projection attachments, equipment is no longer the limiting factor; it is the content and treatment that limit. The film that conveys a sales message for the trade will

ordinarily not be suitable for women's clubs or even for men's service clubs; films suitable for any of those adult groups will not often be suitable for school use and vice versa. So just as a talk delivered by a speaker must be specially prepared and slanted for each audience, a film must be specially addressed to at least each type of audience—the difference being that a film cannot be changed or rearranged for each showing. And because films are expensive in initial outlay, it must be decided whether there will be sufficient opportunity for showings of each type of film to justify the expense. Distribution is an important factor in the use of films, and if a film can receive wide distribution its cost per person reached by the message becomes relatively low. Viewed nationally, there are reported to be between 25,000 and 30,000 groups that have or can obtain projection equipment and that regularly see pictures of this type. Each firm or institution must analyze its own situation to determine how much of this distribution it will reach. Larger national firms often have fifty or more prints of a single picture and several pictures in circulation constantly.

As in other phases of this information-giving process, many good books and articles have been written to guide in the use of films. It should also be remembered that the motion-picture field is a specialized and technical one, in which it will usually be an economy in the long run to spend money on good professional service. A good film is more than a matter of knowing how to focus a camera. The planning of the subject matter, the preparation of the script, the dialogue or narration on the sound track, the supervision and editing of the entire job—these are all functions that call for a high degree of specialized skill. This skill is by no means limited to Hollywood but is available now in most of the larger centers of the country.

One of the responsibilities of the professional is to analyze the potential audience, and the message it is interested to convey or the effect it is intended to produce upon that particular audience, and then to develop the material accordingly. While there have

been many institutional films that were prepared with only a general audience and a general message in mind, and while some of these may have produced valuable results in the past, they may be expected more and more to miss their mark in the future. There is so much competition for the eye, the ear, and the thoughts of every individual today that unless the words and pictures that are offered are of particular interest to the listener or reader, he will quickly turn away to something that does interest him. When motion pictures were still a new thing audiences would watch them out of sheer novelty, whatever their content; and most of the early institutional films seemed to be designed principally to flatter the ego and appeal to the interest of their sponsors. Today they must appeal to the interests of the audience, or there will be no audience.

With these principles in mind there is almost no limit to the fields of information that can be interestingly and entertainingly presented, nor to the types of community audience that can be reached by pictures, provided these two factors are matched. Interesting new products, processes of manufacture, new uses of products, sources of raw materials, research activities, working conditions, employee activities, benefits to the community, company contributions to taxes and local welfare programs, company interest in the safety, health, recreation, and welfare of employees—all of these can be graphically treated in motion pictures. And in varying degrees they can be pitched at levels of understanding and interest that will hold the attention and answer the unasked questions of audiences ranging from small school children to legislative investigating committees.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND HISTORICAL EXHIBITS

There is almost no industry or enterprise that cannot be made the subject of informative and interesting displays of educational or historical materials if a little imagination is applied to the undertaking.

These displays can be straight product displays, such as Servel Company maintains for inspection by the employees and other families of its community in Evansville. Or they can be developed as museums along any of several lines: tracing the history of the company, with models or relics from early buildings, early-day products, early machinery, costumes of workers, etc., leading up by stages to the present modern building and latest products; or tracing similarly the history of the industry generally, from early handicraft stages (crude forges to blacksmith shop to foundry to steel-fabricating plant; or spinning-wheel to power loom to textile plant; etc.); or models, specimens, and pictures from all parts of the world where raw materials are gathered; or similar displays of the foreign countries to which products go; or the same type of display of the remote parts of America where raw materials originate and finished products go.

While such company museums are not numerous, in proportion to the total number of business firms, there are examples scattered throughout America, covering nearly every field of industry and business.

They are as varied as the Shoe Museum of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation in Boston, showing ancient and modern footwear from 2000 B.C. to the present, along with the tools and equipment used in their manufacture; the watch collection of the Elgin National Watch Company at Elgin, Illinois, containing replicas of time-measuring devices from 1400 B.C. through watches of the seventeenth century to those of the present day; the museum and archives of Lincolniana maintained by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company at Fort Wayne, Indiana; the Toledo Scale Museum in Toledo, tracing the development of the modern scale from principles known in ancient civilization; railroad museums of several railroad companies; furniture, tea, typewriters, and calculating machines, locks, buttons, and industrial products of all kinds and historical periods displayed by their makers, together with art, coins, and other educational materials.

Whatever their content, these museums should be distinct from sales exhibits or advertising displays; they are intended for the enjoyment and enlightenment of others than the customers of the company. Yet they present the company's story in a way that is convincing and disarming; and like many other public-relations activities they can be good business promoters—if they aren't used for that.

Some of these exhibits are linked with the development of the community itself. One of them will serve as an example: the historical museum maintained by the Wells Fargo Bank and Union Trust Company on the ground floor of its bank building in San Francisco. Because the bank traces its origin back to the Wells Fargo Express Company that operated stagecoaches in the days of '49, the museum is built around materials dating back to that period, including a stagecoach and all the trappings that went with it. But it has also become a record of California's history as a state and a record of the growth of banking in California. Because the history of the bank parallels the history of San Francisco, and because the exhibit pictures that history, it identifies the bank as an integral part of the community. The museum is a mecca for those interested in the history of San Francisco, California, and the West and is visited by 15,000 persons or more in a year.

Such a display, which can be matched in some degree by any company, serves to bring the people of the community, as well as outsiders, into personal contact with the company. Those with a hobby interest in any of the materials or subjects displayed will be certain to feel a stronger bond of common interest with the company, which is an important step in good public relations or community relations. As suggested in the section above on plant visits and tours, a display that ties together everything seen on a long tour is a valuable asset; and both tour and display have the same virtue of drawing people into personal contact with the company.

If the exhibit is at all extensive, there should be an attendant or some company employee nearby during visiting hours to answer

questions and to be generally helpful in interpreting the exhibit. Either upon arrival or upon departure, depending upon the content, visitors should be offered a booklet or leaflet describing the nature and contents of the museum, exhibit, or display. Just as a company booklet or other souvenirs are valuable mementos of a plant tour, so is a leaflet of some sort a good permanent reminder of a visit to an exhibit. Unless it is important to have at the outset as a catalog to the exhibit, it is often more effective as a friendly parting gesture.

Eighty company museums in the United States and three in Canada were listed in a book by Lawrence Vail Coleman,<sup>2</sup> Director of the American Association of Museums.

Those contemplating establishing such a company museum would do well to consult Mr. Coleman's book for ideas because, in addition to cataloguing existing museums, he discusses such questions as their usefulness, management, quarters, collections, exhibits, and interpretations.

#### DEDICATION CEREMONIES

As a special occasion for bringing the people of the community to the plant, and for bringing information about the company to the attention of the community, dedication ceremonies on the opening of a new plant, a new unit, or any other significant new plant facilities offer a good opportunity. It provides an opportunity to do a particularly impressive piece of community relations, in which every segment of the community can be included.

Because it is news, the local press will feature such an opening and trade papers in all related trades will play it up. Because it is an addition to the community's resources, civic and political officials will feel justified in joining in the ceremonies.

Knowing that people will be interested in what is new, the company can use the story of the new development to relate to it any

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Vail Coleman, *Company Museums*. Washington, D. C., American Association of Museums, 1943.



basic facts in the company's operations that it wants to get across to the public. It particularly can dramatize the new development as an investment in the community and an asset to the community in which the community can take pride—being sure, of course, that the company has first given careful thought to making the development an asset rather than a liability to the community.

In the actual ceremonies the mayor, the governor, county officers, and other local officials, the president of the local chamber of commerce, and leaders of local labor organizations can be invited to participate in various ways. Speeches at any one part of the ceremony should be kept short and few in number; but since there can be a luncheon or dinner to precede or follow the formal dedication, some key figures can speak in one place and some in the other. There also are other ways of participating conspicuously without having to make a speech—cutting a ribbon or chain, unlocking a lock, pulling a switch, etc., any of which can be done by persons who didn't get to make a speech.

By advance planning and co-operation with the press the event can be given feature treatment in news, in pictures, and, depending upon the importance of the project and upon the policy of the particular papers, possibly even in special souvenir editions. Representatives of the local and neighboring papers should, of course, be invited to the actual ceremonies; but they should also be given full advance coverage and an opportunity to make their plans. In line with accepted practice in press relations the papers can be given advance materials with release date protected, and with a balancing of morning and afternoon releases as between the preliminary stories and the actual ceremonies.

In addition to news coverage other local advertisers often make a tie-in with such an event by using their space to congratulate the company upon its progressive move or its contribution to the community.

The Army-Navy "E" ceremonies at war plants during the war followed a pattern that is much the same as may be followed with

dedications; and while the "E" ceremonies became so frequent as to lose most of their community-relations value in many industrial communities, the pattern is still valuable for peacetime relations.

The Chicopee Manufacturing Company demonstrated the peacetime application of the pattern in the opening of its new plant in Gainesville, Georgia, for the manufacture of plastic insect screen and textiles.

#### AWARD CEREMONIES

A similar opportunity, but with different features, is provided by award ceremonies: honoring employees for outstanding service and tying in community representatives.

The Capital Transit Company in Washington, D. C., has made a novel use of this technique in a way that combines good employee relations, good community service, and good relations with community groups. Each week a committee on awards, appointed by the company, chooses an employee with outstanding qualities as an employee and a citizen. Then a party is given at which the president of the citizens' association in the employee's neighborhood presents a citation and a government bond to the winner. The award ceremony is broadcast by radio to the entire community, and the winner's neighbors are invited to attend the broadcast.

## 14.

### *Helping Local Causes and Organizations*

IF RECOGNITION of the community, its achievements, and its aspirations is important to good community relations, the ultimate in that recognition is to help in promoting its local aims and causes. Hence the remaining six sections in this discussion of "positive steps" will deal with ways in which a business firm may help the people of the community in the undertakings that are important to them. First to be considered are the local causes, drives, and organizations that are created by the local people to meet their civic and welfare needs.

To the company that wants simply to do its share when asked, and not to make any unusual or imaginative contribution to the community, opportunities will present themselves as a matter of routine in annual appeals for financial help and an occasional request for personal participation. These we have discussed in the sections above under "passive" activities.

But to those who want to go a step farther, and to get credit for giving leadership in advancing the community, there is a rich field of unexplored needs. The needs exist in virtually every field of community life; and no matter how many agencies are set up to deal with local problems, there always seem to be openings for a business firm, with its special know-how and resources, to step in

and do a spectacular job that the agency alone would have found difficult or impossible—if it had even thought of trying.

The help that business firms can give to local efforts ranges all the way from a simple lending of company facilities for use in community activities to the planning and directing of community campaigns. We shall consider a few examples of the principal ways that have been found to be helpful. The list is by no means exhaustive, because there is no limit to the possibilities. The one thing that all the following examples have in common is that they were answers to particular needs at particular moments. Rather than to be copied directly, they are simply suggestive of new and different opportunities for service and assistance.

#### LEND COMPANY FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

One of the easiest things for a company to do, and yet one of the most valuable to community organizations and movements, is to lend company facilities which already exist to local organizations for their use in meetings, programs, drives, and activities.

In nearly every community adequate meeting-room space is always at a premium, and the struggling local organization cannot afford to spend money for the halls that are available for rent. So if a company has an auditorium or the equivalent (a dining room, cafeteria, gymnasium, conference room, or even the board of directors' room) that is not in constant use, the company can do a useful and warmly appreciated piece of community relations at little or no cost by allowing the room to be used for organization activities. Such a service brings a large cross section of the community, again, into personal contact with the company on a plane of community service. Naturally, some discretion must be used: a women's club might safely use a mahogany-paneled conference room, while a vigorous troop of boy scouts would wisely be assigned to a more rugged space.

So useful do such meeting rooms and facilities become that many companies have built auditoriums and community houses as

a community service. Some of these are established principally to serve company employees but made available also to the other people of the community, while others are offered from the beginning to the community.

The Bayway Community House which the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) has established at Bayonne is an interesting example of such a community-service project. A clubhouse is maintained which is open not only to company employees and their families but to the children and residents of the vicinity. There are clinics for babies, organized social and athletic programs for different age groups, reading and game rooms, bowling alleys, headquarters for the Bayway Post of the American Legion, and kitchens and party rooms available to groups of girls and others who wish to hold suppers, dances, and group parties. The Bayway Community House has found a unique place and performed a large community service.

At Crockett, California, the California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company has a community center that serves the same community-wide purpose. It has both outdoor and indoor facilities, with tennis courts, swimming pool, theater, and other accommodations available for the use of employees, their families, and the other residents of the community.

The National Cash Register Company, whose founder, John H. Patterson, was one of the pioneers in good employee and community relations, provides a comparable community service through its large auditorium in Dayton, Ohio. This auditorium, which seats 2,500, is the hub around which many civic activities revolve and is made available without charge to any legitimate, worthy civic cause. Every high-school class that has graduated in Dayton for many years has held its commencement exercises in that auditorium.

In addition to making the auditorium available to other groups, Mr. Patterson just before his death inaugurated a program of Saturday morning entertainment for children as part of his neigh-

borhood-welfare program. The auditorium is filled every Saturday morning with children of all ages. Any child in the community can attend; those who do, come for an educational film, singing, a radio broadcast, and the little refreshment that is given to each as they leave. As a sidelight on the value of this program the company learned recently of a survey that had been made in Dayton homes by a research organization, without the company's knowledge, to learn what people's attitude was toward corporations. The company was told afterward that these children's meetings were commented upon by more people than any other thing. The children who attend these meetings, of course, together with their older sisters and brothers, are not only the future workers of the company but the future citizens of Dayton. The company has already found by employment interview that many of its present employees made their first contact with the company through these Saturday morning meetings.

Many other companies throughout the country undoubtedly have similar auditoriums or meeting rooms of one size or another that are made available for community purposes. The Montana Power Company at its headquarters in Butte and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company at San Francisco are two others that are known to have large well-lighted auditoriums that are so used.

Meeting places and recreational facilities are not the only company properties that will serve useful community purposes. For instance, the Caterpillar Tractor Company has provided trucks from its company pool for use in salvage drives during the war, and for the Post Office's Christmas rush.

#### USE SHOWROOM WINDOWS AND OTHER SPACE TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY DRIVES

Rather than to rest on minimum compliance with community requests, Caterpillar Tractor Company asks its employees and officials to tell the management of their outside activities and to suggest ways in which Caterpillar may serve those organizations

better. Out of that request have come such practices as the use of company showroom windows and the sides of trucks to advertise community chest, Red Cross, and other drives. As in any good suggestion system, individual imaginations when encouraged by management will produce ideas without limit whereby the company can give such valuable assistance at little or no cost.

An even more unusual example of how the company lends its products, facilities, and equipment for use in local events came on one recent Labor Day. CIO leaders were surprised to have the company offer the use of one of its DW-10 tractors—a big rubber-tired model—to haul the union's float in the Labor Day parade.

As evidence that such a spirit may become contagious, the employees have done their share of volunteering. In the flood of 1943, when the Illinois River rose to 28 feet above its normal level, the Army and the Navy both were fearful that the Caterpillar plant would be flooded and production of vitally needed war materials stopped. Sandbags and men were rushed in by the Army and Navy to protect the plant; but the company officials were just as much concerned over the welfare of their neighbors and town folks. "Homes had to be kept dry, too," they said; and so some 15,000 Caterpillar employees volunteered to work around the clock, not only to keep the plant from being flooded, but also to keep back the waters from neighboring towns and villages.

Company advertising space that may be used for the promotion of local drives ranges all the way from the show windows and truck sides mentioned above to the standard paid space of billboards, newspapers, radio, and other media. "Victory Advertising" programs during the war developed a pattern that can be used in peacetime. Business firms paid for billboard and newspaper ads to sell bonds, blood bank, and other war-service projects. The only company advertising was the company's name at the bottom. That can be done, and is done, by many community-minded business houses, in peace time, to help the community chest, Red Cross, and other movements.

As institutional advertising it is better than most because it immediately identifies the company in the public mind with the community and with something good in the community.

Many spaces not ordinarily used for company or other advertising lend themselves well to the promotion of public causes. The front or back flap of envelopes, the bottom of letterheads, and the mailing permit indicia all allow room for a brief slogan-type message. The house organ or employee newspaper offers room for longer treatment, with banner headlines; and so does the mailing insert, furnished either by the company or by the civic organization involved.

#### ASSIST 4-H, FUTURE FARMERS, BOY SCOUTS, ETC.

More than 1,700,000 young boys and girls in America belong to the 85,000 clubs of the 4-H movement, sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service. In addition the public schools have developed the Future Farmers of America, with more than 200,000 members of high-school age in 7,500 local chapters directed by as many agricultural teachers. Such farm organizations as the Farm Bureau, Grange, and Farmers Union are also interested in rural-youth work and sponsor special youth programs of their own.

In addition to these rural-youth organizations, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and other youth groups are active in both rural and urban communities, with an aggregate membership running into the millions.

Not only do some 400,000 young people leave farms annually and go to urban communities to work and live, but even those who remain on farms are, for the most part, in the orbit of some community, large or small, where they and their families exercise an influence.

The opportunities for service to these groups by business firms is unlimited. They all need volunteer leaders, and they all need program material which a large, well-staffed corporation is best equipped to develop.



General Mills, Inc., has developed a series of manuals, programs, and other educational literature for the use of all these youth groups, some of it designed for the direct use of the youth and some for the guidance of the leaders. The company, moreover, recognizing that there is a gap in most of the organized educational, recreational, and character-building programs for those between eighteen years of age and the age when they fit into the adult farm programs, has taken leadership in fostering efforts to help this older rural youth. It has suggested special projects for this group and has proposed ways in which existing community organizations can help.

Other companies not so identified with agriculture have also interested themselves in these farm-youth groups, and because they are not directly identified with agriculture their co-operation has been more purely a matter of community relations. The Boeing Airplane Company is an example. Its Wichita Division is situated in the heart of the great Middle Western farm belt where the character and problems of communities are colored by agriculture. So, even though the company's operations are not related to agriculture, the company has joined in one of the community's causes by taking an active interest in 4-H work and sponsoring a 4-H Club.

#### CONTEST PRIZES AND AWARDS TO YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

While local merchants have had to protect themselves against requests for donation of merchandise prizes for every sort of local event, other business firms can win community good will by offering worth-while awards to youths who win serious contests or otherwise show notable achievement. Not only may a company provide the standard types of silver cups and trophies, but it may sponsor expense-paid trips to the state fair, to a state-championship athletic tournament, or to whatever is the most-sought mecca of the local youth. To those who achieve in music, a trip to the nearest major city where a symphony orchestra or a concert artist will be performing; to others, similar visits to places or events repre-

senting the zenith in the sciences, arts, sports, or whatever the field of the contest—these are prizes that will be eagerly sought by youth, will be appreciated by leaders of community organizations as incentives to youth, and will gain the sponsoring company recognition as being identified with a worthy cause.

Trips, of course, involve serious responsibilities for planning, both as to programs and as to accommodations, possibly chaperonage and many other features. The sponsoring company must see that all of these features are carefully and skillfully handled; for the damaging results of a slip-up will be in proportion to the good results that can come from successful handling, with the spotlight of local publicity that will be turned on the project.

An award-giving program that can have far-reaching benefits is the founding of scholarships. Such a program has all the same local possibilities of producing good will that any of the other award offers would have. It also can create good will with the university or college to which the student goes, and it can produce an even more direct return to the company; if the recipient of the scholarship returns to be employed by the company, as often happens, the company reaps the harvest of the training; or the company may give a scholarship or fellowship for research in technical problems that are plaguing the company, and may have conditions in its community or industry improved as a result of the research. In those cases the company still gets the benefit of the good will that goes with any of the awards. A report by the National Industrial Conference Board gives interesting data on the scholarship programs of twenty-five companies. Fourteen of the companies mentioned as a motive for establishing their programs the possibility that in the future the recipient might be employed by them. Others considered the program of value in their over-all public-relations efforts. This value was stressed particularly in those programs in which scholarships were limited to special groups, either residents of a particular locality or children of employees.

The studies of the Conference Board show that scholarship programs are not confined to large corporations. A small textile mill in

the Middle West recently set up two four-year scholarships, on an annual basis, as a tie-in to its employee-relations and community-relations programs. In connection with the inauguration of the plan, the company ran a series of fifteen full-page advertisements pointing out its need for trained employees to meet competition and, at the same time, described various steps in the manufacture and distribution of its products. The program itself was an outgrowth of an Open House which the company held for the city's schoolteachers. So much interest was shown by this group that it was decided to broaden the link between the company and the city's educational system.

#### MAKING COMPANY PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY OUTINGS

Just as company auditoriums are valuable for use by community groups that need indoor facilities, so do companies have many kinds of outdoor properties that are suitable for picnics, camping, and other outdoor activities of local organizations.

The Serval Company, for instance, has picnic grounds at its plant in Evansville which are used by the entire community. As many as 100,000 persons in a single year have used the grounds and the other equipment and facilities provided by the company.

Electric-power companies all over America have watershed properties, streams, and lakes that make ideal sites for summer camps for boy scouts, girl scouts, campfire girls, and other youth groups and even for municipal camps. Many of these companies have taken advantage of this opportunity for community-relations service and have set aside suitable sites for such summer camps. A company-donated camp of this sort is a continuing reminder of the company's interest in the community's welfare and the well-being of its present and future citizens.

Companies whose business consists of selling amusement and recreation have special problems and special opportunities in donating the use of their facilities to community organizations. There are always economic and other dangers in giving away what

one ordinarily sells; and yet such donations judiciously handled can be as valuable a step in the community relations of an amusement enterprise as in those of any other firm. Equally good examples could be found throughout the country; the one selected as an illustration here is only one with which the writer happens to be particularly familiar.

One of the largest commercial amusement enterprises in America is Playland-at-the-Beach in San Francisco, operated by the Whitney brothers. It has all the standard amusement devices of Ferris wheels and other exciting rides, roller coasters, "crazy houses," shooting galleries—and many special features of its own. Such an enterprise is highly dependent upon public opinion, both for patronage and for the right to exist. An antagonistic public could put such an enterprise out of business in short order, not only by withholding patronage, but by imposing hampering restrictions that would make it impossible to operate. The fact that this company has enjoyed good public opinion is of course the result of many factors; but not the least of these has been the constructive program of community relations.

In addition to being personally active in many community projects, the head of the amusement company has made intelligently generous use of the unique facilities of Playland to co-operate with the many boys'-work and girls'-work agencies. All through the year days are set aside when underprivileged boys and girls under the guidance of these recreation and welfare groups may enjoy the play facilities without charge. In the course of a year many thousands of children are so entertained, and not in the name of charity, but in the name of co-operation with the particular boys' club or girls' club so that membership in that particular character-building organization is given additional "extra dividend" value.

#### PROGRAM MANUALS AND LITERATURE FOR CLUBS

Mention has been made of a company that prepares manuals, program material, and literature for 4-H clubs and other youth

organizations. In another section reference is made to a company that has developed a suggested agricultural program for an international service club of businessmen.

The same thing can be and has been done for women's clubs, boys' and girls' groups, and nearly every other type of organization that needs program material to interest its members.

The opportunities to develop such materials for organizations are similar to those for schools, as discussed in a later section, and the same cautions should be observed in the matter of commercialism. A dignified identification of the company as the source is always acceptable, but most organizations will be obliged to avoid materials that contain direct sales-promotion messages.

#### PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL FAIRS AND CELEBRATIONS

In many American communities the annual county fair, rodeo, harvest festival, or whatever it may be called is the biggest event in the life of the community and is looked forward to by the citizens each year as the big event of the year. It assumes the same place in the lives of these communities as the old European harvest festivals did in those countries. It gives many people in the community their greatest opportunity for self-expression and becomes a matter of great pride—sometimes of considerable emotion.

But as with so many affairs they also can be one of the biggest headaches. In order that everyone may have fun someone has to do endless hours of work. If a few people find themselves stuck with all the work, they resent it. Because it is hard work to make such affairs "click," nerves and tempers sometimes get frayed, and feeling can then run strongly against those who have failed to help.

There are many ways in which a company can participate, and a company that wants to be regarded as a good neighbor will give such events high priority in setting up its annual schedules. If there is a parade, the company can have a float, a company band, or some other evidence of participation. If there are booths or exhibits, as at the fair grounds, there is an opportunity both to

show interest and to do an educational job for the company and its products by setting up a company exhibit. There are many other ways of helping: in the advertising and promotion of the event, displaying posters, setting up ticket-sale booths, helping with physical design and construction of units, transporting equipment, entertaining visitors.

Often a big company executive, by reason of his training, will be an expert in some line that happens to be a vexing problem to the sponsors of the local event. If he has had a background in traffic management, he may be ideally suited to organize and direct a parade. If he has had experience, and has skill, in preparing sales displays of company products, he may have useful judgment on the management of exhibits. These and similar talents are among the assets that corporation executives bring to a community, and they can make a great contribution to the community at least cost to themselves.

Beyond all this, of course, there are the routine jobs in connection with a community event that require little expertness, that have no glamour—but that have to be done and done thoroughly: the “pick-and-shovel” jobs that make all the difference between a smooth performance and a ragged one. The company whose executives and employes do their share of those chores will be making itself as much a part of the community as those who do the spectacular things. Like an army, a community celebration can’t be all generals—it must have noncoms and privates in the ranks.

Community celebrations often take other forms than fairs or parades and provide different opportunities for participation. Many cities, for instance, have Outdoor Christmas Tree movements, or other holidays lighting programs, in which unanimous participation is important. While many of these programs are sponsored by merchants and are intended primarily to attract people to the downtown stores, nonmerchant businesses have an opportunity to make contributions that often are unique. In Great Falls, Montana, for instance, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company always

joins wholeheartedly and takes a foremost part in the holiday decoration season, even though its plant is completely separated from the main community. The plant grounds are always lavish with special lighting and display; and because the plant is situated on a hill overlooking the city across a river, its spectacular lighting strikes the keynote for the entire community program.

### OBSERVING LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Another occasional point of friction between absentee-owned businesses and the local community is in the observance of local holidays. Industrial concerns usually do not feel local pressure to observe holidays as much as retail stores do—in fact, unless there were a parade or event in which participation was needed, the only explaining a factory manager might have to do would be to his own employees who had to work while their friends had the day off. But with retail stores it is different.

When one store remains open while all others are closed, there is always the suspicion that the open store is trying to take advantage of the situation to grab all the business of people who want to buy on that day and can't find any other place to do it. Not only does it breed resentment among competing stores, but if the competition ultimately forces all the stores to remain open, the entire community may resent the spoiling of a valued holiday.

And it will not help to say, "We're sorry—but we have orders from New York" or Chicago or Headofficeville somewhere else. Nothing could focus attention more strongly on the outsideness, the absentee nature, of the business than such a statement.

The answer is to give local managers authority to use their own discretion in observing such days if it becomes a community decision to do so. There are not many such days in a year, and their importance varies from place to place. Most states have an Admission Day or its equivalent, signaling admission to the Union, or founding, as a separate entity in some way; local custom on the recognition of that day varies even within any one state. In other

places the opening day of a fair or celebration may be the occasion for a full-day or half-day closing.

The profits from staying open may seem to outweigh the loss of good will, and management must decide which is more important. Experience has shown that loss of good will has often cost companies far more in the long run than the profits to be made from a single day. Head-office management should take that into account in looking at daily operating figures and seeing a conspicuously blank day.

#### SPECIALIZED HELPS TO LOCAL CAUSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Large corporations have many technical and professional resources that no civic or charitable organization can hope to duplicate. These resources can at times be applied to community problems with results that the local groups could hardly have secured by themselves but that cost the corporation little because it has the facilities already established. Some of the most valuable of these technical services are of a sort that cannot well be publicized but are known and appreciated by the influential leaders of the community.

An example is found in one of the larger community chests on the Pacific Coast. It had grown over the years to the point where its large staff, its vast accounting, mailing, stenographic, filing, and related functions, its widely ramified staff services, and its personnel problems generally presented a major problem in organization and administration. In the same city are the headquarters for one of the country's larger oil companies—one of the few companies large enough to have a special department of organization to survey, analyze, and solve problems of internal organization and administration.

As a service to the community chest the company assigned a special staff committee of survey experts from its department to make a complete organization and administration study of the chest. The result of that survey was a sweeping reorganization of



internal procedures, the application of many pieces of mechanical office equipment and many modern techniques to speed up routine, more effective utilization of voluntary help, a more rational plan of salary and personnel practices, and generally improved functioning with over-all economy.

Periodically all community chests throughout the country must make salary studies to compare the salaries paid in their constituent agencies, as well as in their own staffs, with those paid by private industry. In making these surveys many corporations have given valuable assistance, not only in supplying data on their own salary classifications, but by lending expert personnel officers to help in planning and conducting the survey.

The problem of handling large amounts of cash at campaign time, with all the rush and confusion that attend a campaign, has bothered many chests. The San Francisco Community Chest was able to put this problem up to a committee of controllers from the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, and the local office of the Collector of Internal Revenue. The advice of this committee has been followed in subsequent years and found very helpful.

At Dayton the chest has received several types of specialized assistance that only a large corporation is equipped to give. General Motors Corporation made a survey of business and accounting methods in use by the chest, similar to the one described above and with equally valuable results. A complete stage show, entitled *You're in the Army, Mr. Jones*, presenting the programs of the community's social agencies, was developed by the Corporation, using the Corporation's own stage equipment and talent.

In the same city the National Cash Register Company has produced most of the publicity material used in community-chest campaigns. Company personnel has also written the script and supervised the production of a sound-slide film which was used for training solicitors.

In many cities the public-address systems used in chest cam-

paigns, as well as in other public events, are loaned by one of the larger business firms.

In addition to these special services most of the community chests receive some general services from larger corporations, such as advice on financing and investments, usually provided by banks and investment firms; auditing of campaign results, frequently done by junior accountants and cost accountants; the financing of special studies and reports; the lending of experts in the building-construction industry to review the needs of agencies for repairs and replacements; and the loan of junior-executive staff to supplement the paid staff of the chest.

Chambers of commerce receive all the same types of specialized help and many others of much more technical nature. The committees of a chamber of commerce are, in fact, often made up of technical experts who donate their services to solve problems for the community in the same fields in which they are highly paid for their private work. In the location of new industries, developing transportation services for the community, breaking traffic bottlenecks, improving freight-rate structures, promoting the utilization of raw materials and natural resources, expanding trade areas, promoting city planning, recreation, beautification—in practically everything that a chamber does—the services of nontechnical volunteers and staff are supplemented by technical specialists from larger corporations or from private professional firms. Engineers, architects, traffic managers, rate experts, accountants, bankers and finance experts, attorneys, advertising executives, art directors, tax experts, chemists, and many other kinds of specialists employed by large corporations have knowledge and skills that can be applied effectively to community problems, but which community organizations like a chamber of commerce seldom can afford to hire.

## 15.

### *Helping Schools and Colleges*

CO-OPERATION with schools can take many forms and pays large dividends. The fact that school children grow up into tomorrow's adults is only part of the story. The extent to which public opinion is affected by ideas and attitudes carried home by school children and relayed to adults in home discussions is probably greater than has been generally recognized. Following are some of the ways to reach this important segment of the community.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL TEACHING MATERIALS

1. *Art Displays.* While schools must be on guard against exploitation, they are always hungry for good supplementary educational materials. Educational motion pictures, art exhibits, radio programs, newspaper and magazine materials, and many forms of printed publications form valuable aids to illustrative teaching and to the relating of school courses to the world of today. The Caterpillar Tractor Company constructed a portable display for an art exhibit on which was shown the best of the paintings used in the Company's national advertising. With these paintings were displayed reprints of the ads and a brief history of the artist. This traveling salon was made available to each of the high schools in the Peoria area first, then in nearby towns, to schools in other cities where the Company's plants are located, and to colleges, art schools, and other institutions. As a stimulus to art classes and to

art students it was received with enthusiasm and generated much favorable comment for the Company.

Rather than to develop form letters or other promotional material to use in offering the art exhibit to the schools, the Caterpillar Company has preferred to make all of its contacts in person. Moreover, every time the exhibit was moved one of the Company's community-relations representatives went with the movers to pick it up and deliver it to the next location. While this practice had many advantages, the Company emphasizes that "the main one was a few more contacts with folks who mold opinion in our community."

2. *Music.* Not every effort at community service can be tested or measured quantitatively as to its reception by the public it seeks to serve. One program, however, that can be so measured, the Standard School Broadcast, has been a spectacular success and increasingly so during each year of its history. Combining as it does localized community service with broad-coverage public-relations methods, it is a model for study.

Conceived and sponsored by Standard Oil Company of California, the Standard School Broadcast has been presented weekly since 1928 as a service to the local schools of the western states. Released over a western network of radio stations, the program presents a half-hour course of instruction in music appreciation co-ordinated with English and art courses and social studies. There is no advertising or any suggestion of commercialism in the program; no mention is made of the company or its products except the simple announcement at the opening and closing: "This is the Standard School Broadcast, presented for you by Standard of California."

At the start of the first year the program was broadcast, 72 schools were listening in and using the study courses suggested by Standard; by the end of the year, the audience had grown to 500 schools; it continued to grow until, at the start of World

War II, 5,000 schools in seven states were using the broadcast as part of their curriculum.

To assist the schools in using the broadcast, the Company has prepared and distributed printed material which finally evolved into an elaborate *Teacher's Manual*. Supplying the demand of the schools requires a printing of 20,000 copies of this manual.

Any resistance that might have been offered to the introduction of a commercially sponsored program into the public schools was overcome by many factors, of which the absence of advertising was only one. Educators have come to realize that the Company was furnishing something that the schools could not readily produce themselves, that it was aiming to supplement, not to replace, the classroom teacher; and that the schools themselves could have a large voice in shaping the program. An Advisory Board is set up by the company, with 50 to 60 leading music educators in the West asked to serve each year. The meetings of this board not only produce helpful advice and guidance for the broadcast program but give the company still another point of personal contact with the communities represented.

The merit of this program has been recognized outside the territory it serves. It has won the George Foster Peabody Medal for conspicuous service in radio broadcasting; it has twice been awarded the Phi Beta Plaque of the national professional women's fraternity for music and dramatic arts; and has won two Ohio State University First Awards.

3. *Science*. Another outstanding example in a different field is the service Westinghouse Electric Corporation has developed to assist public schools in teaching science courses. Finding, by survey, that fewer than 1,000 out of 26,000 high schools and junior high schools have full-time science teachers, Westinghouse offered a wide range of teaching aids that included educational films; illustrated booklets in a Little Sciences Series each telling the story of a special phase of science; pictorial and cartoon-type historical posters and bulletins, home-economics teachers' reference manuals,

and folders for students; farm guide books; and many other illustrated materials. The motion picture and slide films were designed not only for science classes but for other groups as well.

Although visual aids are, of course, essential in science teaching, radio also played a part in this program. Instead of a live broadcast, a series of 40 programs called "Adventures in Research" is transcribed and made available free on request for local rebroadcast weekly for classroom use. The Federal Radio Education Commission of the United States Office of Education in Washington, D. C., handles distribution of these transcriptions, and nearly 100 stations in 41 states and Alaska have been using them.

Like the Standard School Broadcast—and like every other effort with any hope of being accepted by schools—this program is free from advertising or commercial promotion. It is designed and presented only as a community service.

4. *Films.* Many of the media of publicity not designed exclusively for school use are valuable aids to teaching and are appreciated by school officials. One of the most versatile of these is films. The stories of human activity that lie back of familiar household products, when told in absorbing film sequences, make effective lessons in economics, commercial geography, and related social-science studies.

A complete list of the films so prepared by business firms and associations is long enough to fill several catalogs and is added to each month in lists published in periodicals. The following examples are typical, however:

*Alaska's Silver Millions*—the story of the Alaska salmon industry, produced by the American Can Company.

*Beet Sugar the Builder*—showing every stage in the production of beet sugar from beet seed to the sugar bowl, produced by a group of western beet-sugar companies.

*Travelogues of Yellowstone, Glacier, Bryce, and other National Parks*—produced by Ford Motor Company.

*Trees to Tribunes*—showing the evaluation of a newspaper from

the tree through wood pulp to the printed paper, produced by *Chicago Tribune*.

*Network Broadcasting*—produced by Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company.

*Exploring with X-Ray*—produced by General Electric Company.

Nearly every large industry, every important industrial process, and every geographical region of America has been recorded in films at one time or another by commercial firms and has furnished useful material for teaching in schools. As new products and methods are developed, and as interesting changes occur in a section of the country with which a company has some connection, they offer opportunities for new films.

Analyzing the list of films catalogued for use by one of the larger school systems, one sees that they fall into certain main categories as to subject matter:

Products of the Company (or of the Company's industry) and how they are produced

Industries using the Company's product

Raw materials entering into the Company's product

Scenic areas reached by Company's transportation facilities

Scenic areas served by Company's product or services

Scenic areas from which Company's product or raw materials come

Scientific wonders using Company's product or processes

Health aids to which Company or its products contribute

History and evolution of industry in which Company is engaged

While some companies have prepared special films aimed at school-age audiences, others have found that the same pictures that would appeal to school classes are equally interesting to service clubs, women's clubs, business and civic organizations, and other adult groups.

One note of caution should be sounded, however. As in preparing advertising copy, or in any other form of human communication, *know your audience*. What appeals to one audience may appeal to another; if it does, that is fine, but it is a coincidence, not a certainty.

As the head of one visual-aid library points out: "Too many films try to be all things to all people. They try to combine school, club and commercial appeals, teaching and entertainment—and they end by 'falling between the chairs.'"

5. *Other Graphic Aids.* The same principles apply and the same use is made of other visual aids such as charts, graphs, maps, pictures, and similar graphic materials. Many companies that cannot justify the expense of a motion-picture film can and do prepare poster material that serves the same purpose. Many subjects actually lend themselves better to the chart forms than to film presentation. To mention only two examples out of thousands catalogued, the W. K. Kellogg home-economics department distributes a chart on "Food Sources of Vitamins" and Caterpillar Tractor Company one showing "Cross Section of Diesel Engines."

Most of the catalogs that list films for school use also include the other graphic items under the general heading of "Visual Aids."

#### LENDING EQUIPMENT FOR SPECIAL TECHNICAL STUDIES

Nearly every large industry and many smaller ones have, either as products or as tools, some kind of specialized apparatus or equipment that can occasionally be loaned to schools or colleges for inspection and study in conjunction with technical courses; and many companies have given valuable assistance to the schools in their communities by so doing. Among the types of equipment that have been made available in this way are:

- Trucks, tractors, and automotive equipment to shop courses
- Airplane parts and instruments for aviation and aircraft courses
- Motors and electrical apparatus for courses in electricity or physics
- Radio and electronic devices for physics courses
- Microscopes for science courses
- Photographic equipment
- Instruments for testing, measuring, counting, etc.
- New synthetic materials

The technical and scientific developments during the war have multiplied the list of possibilities. Since the average school cannot



afford to buy these materials, and usually does not need them permanently anyway, its teaching facilities can be expanded by such loans.

### SCHOOL VISITS TO PLANTS

Because many of the most interesting operations and pieces of equipment cannot be moved about, and because in any case it is helpful to see each unit in its place as part of a complete operation, schools find it a useful aid to instruction to be able to take classes on visits to industrial plants.

The many "do's" and "don'ts" of plant tours have been covered in an earlier chapter. All that needs to be added here is a reminder that school pupils and students have different interests from bankers or ministers; and that different age groups within the schools may be interested in different things. Those conducting the tours must, therefore, be prepared to make slight changes of emphasis in the tour routine. That phase of the planning can be worked out in consultation with the teachers.

### LECTURES BY TECHNICAL EXPERTS

More often at the college level, but frequently in high-school courses, business firms have arranged to have their executives and technical experts serve as visiting lecturers. It may be the president of a bank who gives lectures on money and banking, the Chief Engineer who lectures on physics, or the chemist who lectures—possibly with demonstrations—to the chemistry class.

This relationship has unlimited possibilities. It can cover all the fields covered by the visual-aid teaching materials as well as many fields that do not lend themselves to such materials. In many cases such an executive-lecturer can use films, posters, or pamphlets to illustrate his talk.

These lecture appearances have the special value of personal contact; and the higher the executive who makes the lecture appearance, the more it personalizes and humanizes his institution in the community.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

College scholarships are offered by many industries in many fields, like the science scholarships offered by Westinghouse as a part of its school-science programs. Besides the great good that they do in helping deserving boys and girls to receive a college education, they have special community-relations value.

Because they involve intensive competition and discussion in the schools, they keep the sponsoring company's name actively before the community as associated with a worthy objective.

Scholarships and fellowships can be adapted in many ways to the requirements of a particular company. Sometimes the donor company endows a fellowship for study or research in a field related to the company's own operations. At other times, however, a double community-relations value is extracted by endowing the fellowship for studies aimed at solving some pressing problem of the community—such as finding new uses for the raw materials and other natural resources of the area, or the elimination of an agricultural pest that is threatening the local economy.

## ANNUAL PRIZES FOR SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

Closely related to the scholarship idea is the offering of annual prizes for winners in some field of school competition. By stimulating greater achievement and higher standards in scholastic, literary, artistic, musical, athletic, and other efforts, these prizes can make a contribution to the life of the community and to the development of its youth. Here again the company's name will be associated with a worthy cause and will be identified as a constructive force in the community.

## PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

In any community there will be some problem in providing job opportunities for students. In varying degrees students have need of supplementing family income with summertime, week-end, and

after-school employment. Because it is often a nuisance to rearrange work schedules to provide for any kind of part-time or temporary work, many companies just don't bother. As a result they miss another good opportunity to tie themselves closer to the people of the community. The ones, on the other hand, who have made a practice of providing such job openings have been able to capitalize on it in many ways: first, the work done by well-selected students can be productive in itself; second, the relations built up, just through these students, their families and their friends are valuable; and third, there are many opportunities to tell the rest of the community through institutional advertising and publications.

Incidentally, it can be one of the cheapest and most painless ways of trying, sifting, and selecting potential future permanent personnel.

#### FUTURE EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR GRADUATES

Whether they are selected through earlier temporary employment or otherwise, the offering of future employment to students upon their graduation is another good link with the community. If the young men and women of the community can look forward to careers in the company, the company becomes to that degree a home institution.

If such hiring becomes a practice, the company has a better opportunity than is usually afforded employers to study the background and earlier record of the prospective employee. Because it is selective, it can become somewhat of an honor that students will seek.

#### ASSISTANCE IN ADULT EDUCATION

Because adult-education classes often involve crafts, skills, and the handling of many kinds of materials and tools, business firms are in a position to offer the same kinds of co-operation to those classes as to the elementary and secondary grades. Instructors, lecturers, manuals, tools, sample materials, and many other teach-

ing aids can be provided by companies if company and school officials get their heads together and explore the possibilities.

#### ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF SCHOOL-RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Successful school programs have one essential element in common with all other successful programs in community relations and in public relations generally: they must be based upon a thorough study of what the schools need, coupled with what the company is prepared to supply. In the case of Standard of California, supplying music material was an outgrowth of the well-established Standard Symphony broadcasts; with Westinghouse, of course, science was its own natural field. Companies in the meat, cereal, implements, and other related businesses have found it a natural tie-in to supply aids to teaching of agriculture and home economics. Railroad, bus, air, and steamship lines can help in geography and history. Nearly every business has materials useful either in social science, industrial arts, vocational training, or the recently developed field of distributive education.

But any company proposing to enter this field must be prepared to play the game according to the rules. The materials offered must fill a genuine need and they must be designed for community service—not for sales promotion.

Paul S. Amidon, consultant on educational relations to General Mills, Inc., has listed several points to consider in building a sound program of public relations with schools. These include (1) contribution to the training of youth, (2) service in the particular field where the company has expert knowledge, (3) avoidance of sales promotion on behalf of the company, (4) recognition of the necessary impartiality of the schools, and (5) providing of materials which implement the school program and fit in with the existing curriculum.

Amidon stresses the importance of close consultation with the educators themselves in the development of this material.

In commenting on the last point, the integration of materials

into classroom teaching curricula, Amidon tells some of the reasons most often listed by teachers for supplementing textbooks with commercial materials provided by business:

They enrich the curriculum and enliven the study of a subject.

They provide up-to-date information.

They cover a range of subject fields often not adequately covered in textbooks.

They are practical and give a feeling of reality.

They are often free and easily accessible to the schools.

They provide a contact with industries that often constitute an important segment of the community the school serves.

They provide effective consumer education.

They add to knowledge about different products and different companies.

They present different points of view.

They provide for exploration and specialization among students with special interests.

They provide a source for studying the techniques and methods of advertising.<sup>1</sup>

Amidon then goes on to list a series of "do's" and "don'ts" that companies should observe if they want the greatest acceptance and use of their materials. The "don'ts" include injunctions not to spread the name of the company all over the pages, or the names of the products throughout the context; not to distort the value of products at the expense of presenting a valid story, or to make dishonest claims for products. Amidon advises not to belittle other companies' products; not to assume that you are meeting all needs expressed by teachers in certain fields; not to ignore the laws of learning; not to write down to the teacher; not to sacrifice educational soundness for color, appeal, and promotion; or to use the scare approach. Don't write above the level of the students for whom the material is designed, he warns. Don't use the negative approach, try to cover too much territory, or play on emotions.

<sup>1</sup> Paul S. Amidon, "How to Build Good Relations with Schools." *Public Relations Journal*, August, 1946, pp. 10-13.

Among the "do's" listed by Amidon are the following: integrate materials with existing courses of study; provide material graded to different child-development levels; remain within specific fields; plan material for use by specific persons in the system—teacher, administrator, or pupil. Amidon suggests that visual-aids material be designed in conformity with the best practice in matters of typography, color, design, illustration, and format. Materials should be developed with controlled vocabulary, proper sentence structure, sentence breaks proper for eye span at various levels, and with illustrations that contribute to the story. The presentation should be truthful, accurate, and objective. Materials should be designed suitable to children in terms of chronological as well as educational development. Finally, materials should be prepared that are concerned with principles or products in general rather than with brand names.

## 16.

### *Helping in City Beautification and Improvement*

ANYTHING that will help to make a community a better place to live becomes not only a contribution to the community but also an asset to the company making the contribution, so that it is one of the best investments in community relations.

It is also one form of community relations in which every company and every person in town can join, because it starts at home with one's own premises. It can expand and extend to some of the more elaborate programs described below, but the irreducible minimum should be the maintenance of one's own plant and grounds in attractive condition. Here are a few suggestions in that direction.

#### STARTING AT HOME

The first step is to review the "don'ts" listed earlier in this book: don't let the company premises be unsightly; don't leave buildings unpainted, vacant lots untended, weeds growing, trash piles accumulating; don't let store fronts or building fronts become run down.

Any factory, warehouse, or store can be a community asset, or it can be an eyesore. The difference usually is not a matter of great expense, but one of thought and imagination. As far as expense is

concerned, there is evidence that the cost would be more than offset by increased labor output alone. Studies of psychological factors in employment have shown that mental attitudes and in turn efficiency are markedly affected by the working surroundings—by color, cleanliness, neatness, cheerfulness, or the reverse. Even the feeling of pride in surroundings has an effect upon some workers.

If a company once makes up its mind that its property is going to be made attractive, the ways of doing it are not hard to find.

Such nationally known firms as H. J. Heinz and Cream of Wheat provide examples of what can be done. The Cream of Wheat plant at Minneapolis is a show place with its lawns and gardens surrounding the plant buildings. H. J. Heinz, in its plants, its warehouses, and its sales offices all over the country, has followed a program of landscaping and architecture that makes its buildings fit into whatever architecture is characteristic of the community. Some of its buildings might be mistaken for neighborhood schools rather than factories.

Food-packing companies like these and the many others that have followed similar “good housekeeping” programs are, of course, well advised to do so because they serve a double purpose. In addition to good community relations, employee morale, and the other factors common to all companies, food companies should always suggest cleanliness and good housekeeping; a program of landscaping and plant beautification does that.

But food plants are not alone in such programs. The Benjamin Electric Company, for instance, has built a plant at Des Plaines, Illinois, in what is a predominantly residential area and has made the plant so attractive that it has not been objectionable even in such an area.

When Bond Stores, Inc., built a new clothing factory in Rochester, it was allowed to do so in a neighborhood zoned for residences. City officials took this action because the appearance and layout of the plant were so handsome that, in their judgment, the



plant does not detract from the attractiveness of the neighborhood.

The architectural and engineering features of this plant development were so unusual that they have been the subject of national-magazine articles.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson & Johnson's plant at Crawford, New Jersey, was well blended into the community and became one of its show places. It was modern in design and confined to a single story.

#### POLICY ON LOCAL CONSTRUCTION

Sylvania Electric Products, Inc., in its recent expansion program, has declared the policy that in going into smaller communities its plants would be made to conform to local settings so that they would add to, rather than detract from, the attractiveness of those communities. Its plant at Bayside, Long Island, is an example of that policy. While the plant is large, only about 20 per cent of the land area is used for buildings, with the remainder devoted to parking and landscaping.

General Electric Company and Hoffman Radio Company have also adopted the policy, in their recent expansions into smaller communities, that they would make their plants harmonize with their surroundings and be an aesthetic asset to their communities.

Some companies have employed landscape architects and decorators to plan the beautification and improvement of plant premises. That is desirable and should be considered; but it is by no means necessary if imagination is used in utilizing the resources at hand. (As a minimum, most executives would do well to let their wives take an objective look at the company property and suggest a plan of landscaping and decorating to brighten it up!) Why not give employees a feeling of participation? Every company has amateur gardeners and amateur decorators, many of whom belong to garden clubs and other groups devoted to the decorative arts. A contest among employees for the best plan or for individual ideas for beautifying the plant would produce many valuable ideas. If the

<sup>1</sup> *Engineering News-Record*, April 3, 1947, pp. 77-79.

employees were made to feel they were a part of the movement, they might even want to join in the planting of trees, shrubs, flowers, or lawns. Aside from beauty, such a program could produce priceless morale.

But even without advice, and without any artistic talent whatever, any executive with enough powers of observation to entitle him to his job can stand off and look at his plant with a stranger's eyes and see things that can be done to improve it. Stand across the street or a block away and start your inspection with the first thing that comes into view: Is the property line neat and trim? If the plant is in an area with curbing at the street line, is your curb in good condition? If the adjoining properties have sidewalks, is yours in good condition? If curb or walk is not called for, is the roadside well graded and clean? If it is used for parking, is it hard-surfaced or is it a mudhole in winter and a dust bowl in summer? Would it look better if parking were provided elsewhere and the front reserved for landscaping? Is it kept clean of weeds? Is there room for planting between the property line and the building or fence line—shrubs, hedge, flower beds, lawn, or climbing things? (Consult the gardeners on this!)

Is each building on the plant property kept painted? Are the colors pleasing, and do they make a pleasant picture—or is everything painted a heavy, monotonous color that says "factory" in each square foot? Modern industrial designers and architects such as Raymond Loewy, Walter Dorwin Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, and others have shown that factories and warehouses do not have to be painted in the drab colors that have characterized most of those that had any paint at all—nor in the monotonous glaring white that has usually been substituted by those who wanted to make things brighter. Combinations of colors, contrasts and blends tastefully used, help not only to add a cheerful note but to break up and reduce the impression of heavy bulk.

These modern designers have also demonstrated that functional utility can be combined with grace and beauty in the building

design itself. That is easier to achieve, of course, in the original design of a new building than in the refurbishing of an old one; but imaginative designers often can suggest relatively simple treatments of old buildings that will remove or relieve ugliness.

One feature of an industrial plant that can add to or detract from its appearance and its harmonizing with its surroundings is the way in which the company name is displayed. Especially if the plant is located near a residential area that is not otherwise industrialized, names and other advertising signs should be as unobtrusive as possible. Identification is important, but it can be obtained without offensiveness. The conventional painting of a company name across the broadside of a building is probably the least attractive handling of the problem, with some types of roof-top signs running a close second. Roof-top signs have their place, especially in densely settled areas where visibility to passing traffic is an objective, but in more isolated locations signs nearer ground level blend into the surroundings better. Many companies have worked their names into garden displays, spelling out the name in shrubs or flowers; others have worked out scale models of the recognizable trademark or brand name in a three-dimensional display at ground level.

Night lighting of buildings and grounds to create artistic effects can be a pleasing sight to the community and can often enhance the appearance of buildings that are not attractive in themselves. Here again, though, care must be taken not to disturb residential areas by glare, blinking, or other lighting effects.

Fences are another problem. If a fence is necessary, it should be made an asset instead of a liability. The old conventional high board fence, left unpainted to grow weathered and dirty, is a symbol of all the ugliness an industrial plant can have. Yet there are many kinds of fence that can add beauty: a woven-wire fence with vines, roses, or other climbers growing up it, for instance, or many types of stone and brick walls. If wood is desired, many attractive ways of using wood in fences can be found by studying modern

homes and gardens where grape-stake, split-rail, and other fences have been used to combine privacy with a background for plantings. Even the old-style board fence can be transformed into something a little less ugly by planting greens of some sort against it.

Whatever is done to beautify the plant, it will do little good if it is not kept up. Even an old place of no particular artistic distinction, if kept in well-scrubbed, polished, and painted condition, can be pleasing because of its look of pride and may acquire a certain quaintness and dignity; while even the most artistically planned architecture and landscaping can soon become drab and depressing if neglected.

So, while upkeep need not necessarily be a heavy item of expense, it should have as secure a place in the budget as maintenance of machinery and equipment.

Good housekeeping is a part of good neighborliness.

#### SPONSORING "FACE-LIFTING" CAMPAIGN FOR THE COMMUNITY

If everyone in town took his housekeeping responsibilities seriously, it would not be necessary to conduct organized campaigns to get the entire community into better condition. But unfortunately that kind of civic pride needs an occasional prodding, so that periodically someone has to organize an effort to arouse it. Those efforts have taken two forms. First, there is the "Clean Up, Paint Up" type of campaign; and then there is the campaign for modernization, or "face lifting," involving more fundamental changes.

The "Clean Up, Paint Up" campaigns have usually been conducted by organized groups such as the chamber of commerce or junior chamber of commerce. They are usually annual, and are aimed at the degrees of city-wide cleanness, neatness, and sanitation that can be achieved quickly and in which everyone in town can participate. They aim to arouse consciousness of the need for continuing maintenance and good housekeeping, and to generate increasing interest in betterment of properties; but in the campaign

itself there is usually no suggestion of extensive structural changes.

In spite of such annual drives, however, there ultimately comes a time in most communities when more fundamental treatment is needed. Office and store buildings in the business section, over a period of years, undergo such different treatment—some being well maintained, others neglected and run down; most of them undergoing repeated functional alterations that depart from their original architecture; each one putting up a different type of electric sign in front—that finally the street is a hodgepodge.

Recognizing this, many successful "face-lifting" campaigns have been conducted in cities of all sizes throughout the country. Property owners have been persuaded to join in a program of rebuilding store fronts, building fronts, and entrances to conform to a harmonious modern style.

In many cases these campaigns have been sponsored by organized groups or associations; but in some others a single business firm has taken the lead as a matter of its own community relations and has organized the others into action. In Oakland, California, the Down Town Property Owners Association, representing a group of business men who saw businesses moving out of the old original business section into newer districts, organized to restore the attractiveness of the downtown area. That program was so notably successful that it has been copied by many others with similar threats of decentralization. City-wide groups such as the Sacramento Merchants Association and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce have done the same. In Kansas City, Baltimore, Louisville, Atlanta, and Omaha similar programs have been conducted.

In other cases a single business firm has taken the initiative in organizing the movement. The Franklin Square National Bank of Long Island, seeing that its business district needed a face lifting, called together the merchants of the town. The president of the bank pointed out the store fronts and other things about their places of business that needed improvement. He urged them to join

forces, hire expert advice, buy materials in bulk, and get the job done at a saving, at the same time achieving a result that would harmonize. The bank offered to lend the money to make it possible. The thirty-four merchants along Franklin Square's main street all signed up, realizing that a more attractive shopping district would bring more consumers and increased sales. That was just what happened, with the result that larger and more convenient parking facilities became necessary. When the Town Board approved the construction of a new parking field the bank purchased the bonds, and the parking field is in active use.

Banks in Camden, Maine, Seneca Falls and Rome, New York, Middletown and Springfield, Ohio, and others in other states have followed suit. As a result the central shopping and business areas of those communities have had a face lifting, and employment has been furnished for hundreds of workers in the process.

At the same time there have been by-product results that ripple outward in all directions. A cynic would point out that naturally the banks gained a certain amount of loan business; but that was trivial compared with the increased prestige and standing that the banks gained by their leadership. The dividends in public relations were more valuable than the interest earned. Furthermore, the example set by the organized downtown movement has, according to reports, started the entire community on a spurt toward modernization. Such a trend will almost inevitably follow, as a matter of wholesome social competition, if anyone forcefully leads the way.

A word of caution is in order on all such programs, however. "Modernization" is a broad and vague word, and many sins have been committed in its name. Some of the community building-modernization programs have taken old buildings, with original charm but grown shabby, and, by a uniform pattern of tile fronts or other "modern" design, have converted once-distinctive buildings into rows of false exteriors completely lacking in personality. In many cases renovation—the restoration of original character lost

through change and through wear—may be more in order than the substituting of modern lines. In any case personality of individual buildings is not inconsistent with a pleasing appearance of the group, if thought is given to harmony rather than to a deadly uniformity.

#### SPONSORING TREE-PLANTING PROGRAMS

There is probably no single resource in nature that is any more versatile in its bounties, that affects more phases of human life, than a tree. When it is cut, it provides lumber for every stage of living; but while it stands, it conserves water, builds soil, tempers winds, offers shade, and—often overlooked until it is too late—adds beauty and restful outlook to those around it.

Yet there is probably no single resource that man has been more ruthless, more thoughtless, or more improvident in destroying than trees.

When people speak of “a pretty little town” or “a bleak, drab place”—what is the principal difference? Trees. Nothing makes a town or city “pretty” more infallibly than the presence of trees; nothing makes it “ugly” more certainly than the lack of trees.

If that is so, what offers greater possibilities to a company that wants to make a contribution to community life than a tree-planting program? Not only the patron-owner of a “company town,” but any company in any town can sponsor a program for tree planting on some scale. If not a town forest, then a few trees in a park or along the streets. Arrangements would have to be made with city or town authorities for a co-operative enterprise. (What better community relations than the very act of joining in a co-operative venture?)

The story of Glen Lyon, Pennsylvania, is such a striking example that it should be an inspiration to every factory management, and is worth more than casual mention.

While it is not the story of a company taking the initiative in community betterment, at least it is the story of a company that

finally saw the light and gave its wholehearted co-operation to one man's idea.

As Clarence Woodbury tells it in *This Week* magazine,<sup>2</sup> it is more than a story of the physical beautification of a town; it is the story of what beauty or ugliness can do to people in a town.

Glen Lyon is a little hard-coal town in Pennsylvania. Until Stanley Mesavage came along, it was ugly with the ugliness of sixty-five years of coal mining. Scarcely a tree or a blade of grass had survived the cutting or the burning, the smoke or the dust.

Stanley Mesavage, born into this drabness as a miner's son, was determined to do something about it. From his earliest childhood he studied about trees, borrowed books, wrote letters for information, made test plantings in his back yard. When he had to quit high school to go to work in the mines, he subscribed to a correspondence-school course in forestry.

Finally, when he felt he knew enough, he went to "the biggest man in town," the superintendent of the Susquehanna Collieries Company, and made him a proposition. He offered to furnish the trees and the labor, if Mr. Weineck, the superintendent, would let him start a community forest on company land. Mr. Weineck had doubts, but gave his permission.

Stanley's first job, after that, was to sell his idea to other people, and he began to spend all his spare time doing it. It wasn't easy. The tradition that a coal town is ugly, was stronger in many minds than desire to relieve the ugliness. But Stanley Mesavage kept at it, and little by little he won support. Ministers of all faiths endorsed his plan from the pulpit, and the superintendent of schools allowed him to collect three cents from each school child to pay for seedlings. Three pennies from a miner's child, at the depth of the depression, was no small item; but the children, with more vision and more hope than their parents, scraped and saved. Finally enough money had been accumulated to make a start, and 1600 school children marched out with Mesavage to plant

<sup>2</sup> Clarence Woodbury, *This Week*, May 26, 1946.



their trees on a barren hillside. A brass band led the procession, which had all the spirit of a crusade. It was, in fact, a great adventure, because most of the children had never planted any living thing in the earth before; as Woodbury tells the story, they were almost pathetically eager to have a town forest.

That first planting was only the beginning. Impressed by what Stanley Mesavage had done, Mr. Weineck gave him a job as forester for the colliery. He went on planting, year after year, with the help of the school children and their pennies, until he had planted 450,000 seedlings. With his skill he made trees of all kinds—pines and black locust, evergreens and deciduous—thrive on the mountains of mine refuse where nothing living had ever grown before.

The whole town gradually began to realize that something was happening to it—something quite wonderful and miraculous was being done to and for their community. The rebirth did not stop with the trees.

Before the planting started, the houses were as bleak, as grimy, and as black as the hillsides. Houses were unpainted because it was no use painting them. The smoke, grit, and dust ruined the paint anyway, so why paint? Doors and windows were always closed, but even that did no good because coal dust got in through the cracks. Clothes were hung out on clotheslines, but they all turned gray.

The moods of the people at times seemed as black and ugly as the town. Poles, Russians, Italians, and Slovaks clustered into separate little settlements called "patches"; they were slow to make friends with the other groups but quick to make brawls. It took three policemen to patrol a town of 4,500 people.

Today Glen Lyon is still a mining town, but by comparison, either with other mining towns or with its own previous incarnation, it is a green paradise. A whole new life cycle has started: leaves and pine needles have formed a new top soil for flowers and grass; with the new growth on the ground and in the air, birds and many other forms of wild life have reappeared. With trees

twenty feet tall to form a windbreak, with vegetation instead of dust carpeting the soil, the air is cleaner.

The effect on the people of Glen Lyon has been as striking as the effect on the hillsides. With the example of more attractive scenery around them, they have made their homes more attractive. More important still, their new pride in their community has seemed to give them a greater feeling of community, of common interests and friendliness. The former racial antagonisms seem to have faded out, and there is only one policeman now instead of three.

Whether it was cleaner air to breathe, more sunlight penetrating through the atmosphere, or more beauty to inspire people's senses that made the change in Glen Lyon, all of those are vital factors in community life as they are in individual lives. They are factors that can never be neglected by anyone interested in developing the maximum values in single or community lives.

In this case other employers soon recognized the value of what Stanley Mesavage had done, and he was hired in 1941 by the Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce at Wilkes-Barre to apply his program to dozens of other communities in the region.

What Stanley Mesavage has done in Pennsylvania others could do all over America. The company that takes the initiative in doing it will find it paying large dividends, not the least of which would be healthier, happier company communities.

#### SPONSORING A "BETTER HOME TOWN" PROGRAM

Similar to the "face-lifting" program described above, but reaching more deeply into the community's life and economy, is the "Better Home Town" program sponsored by the Georgia Power Company in the cities and towns that it serves. It was started during World War II as a "program for Georgia's peace-time progress"; and, unlike many ambitious postwar plans, it has survived as a continuing program.

Seeing what had happened to the cities, towns, and farms of

Georgia after World War I, the leaders of the Company decided that the same thing should not happen again after World War II. When inflation was followed by the deflation of the early 1920's, people began to leave Georgia. In the years between wars, one person out of four born on farms left their rural homes. Graduates of the colleges and universities left the state to work elsewhere. In all, more than 1,000,000 people born in Georgia by now had left for some other state.

Realizing that one reason for the exodus, particularly by young people, was the fact that only four states in the Union had lower per capita incomes than Georgia, and that the state would sink still lower if it continued to lose population, the Company officials proceeded to develop a program that would make the younger generation want to stay in Georgia and would make others want to come there, both as tourists and as new permanent residents.

They knew that such a reversal of the trend would call for a great reawakening of spirit in all the urban and rural communities of Georgia, because it would mean that these present and prospective residents would have to be offered something that only combined community effort could supply. What that "something" was, they defined in their five goals of a "5-Star Better Home Town":

1. *Attractive employment for returning servicemen and war workers, and for present and future citizens*
2. *Promising opportunities for the advancement of all*
3. *Comfortable living conditions for citizens and visitors*
4. *Modern schools and good churches*
5. *Pleasant recreational and social facilities*

There was a job for everyone in seeking those goals. For some of them involved businessmen and investors developing new and expanded industries to provide new opportunities for employment and new financial resources for the other goals; others involved local governments, schools, churches, and civic groups as organized bodies; while still others simply called for individuals to do things

as individuals to make their own homes and premises more attractive.

The local communities that were to join in this Better Home Town movement were urged to ask themselves three questions and then to take three principal steps:

QUESTION	STEP
1. <i>What Have We Got?</i>	Find out the facts about the town.
2. <i>What Do We Want?</i>	Define the objectives for making the town better.
3. <i>How Can We Get It?</i>	Design the solutions for making the community a 5-Star Better Home Town in light of the facts.

This program was first taken to the leaders of cities and towns throughout Georgia. They were enthusiastic about it. But what about the people as a whole? Before attempting to put the program fully in motion, the Company proceeded to find out what the people thought.

A contest was held, with \$5,200 in war bonds offered for the best ideas on "Five Ways to Make My Community Better." Men, women, and children—7,027 of them—sent in letters of up to a thousand words, full of concrete suggestions.

The letter contest had many values. It served its purpose of stimulating interest in better towns, of arousing the state to its great possibilities. But beyond that it developed a gold mine of ideas for the program; and, above all, it made the program the people's own. The Georgia people drew their own pattern.

The ideas and suggestions contained in these 7,027 letters were analyzed, tabulated, and classified by a carefully selected staff from Emory University. The eleven major classifications set up by this staff were, in effect, subdivisions of the five goals suggested by the Company; but the ideas submitted translated these general goals into specific realities—a new sweet-potato dehydrator here, a better hotel there, extended rural electrification somewhere else, swimming pools, concert programs, school libraries, better-trained and

better-paid teachers, improved sidewalks, street cleaning, a new hospital—these and hundreds of other “specifics” that showed that Georgia people were giving serious thought to the welfare of their towns. Several hundred letters—more than one out of ten—listed “better conditions for Negroes” as one of the critical needs of the state; and listed better housing, better education, better economic opportunities, and better co-operation between races as some of the specific ways of accomplishing their goal.

Backed by this articulate evidence of what the people wanted, the Company went ahead to put the program into motion. Each city and town was encouraged to organize a Better Home Town Committee. The membership was made as diversified as possible in order to include both men and women; public officials and private citizens; farmers and businessmen; women’s club, garden club, chamber of commerce, luncheon club, and other group leaders; anyone with vision and willingness to work for the good of the community.

The Company furnished these local committees with working manuals, outlining their procedure in clear, simple terms. Included in the manuals was an Analysis Sheet with a check list of some twenty-two major groups of questions to be answered in getting the facts and making an inventory of the present conditions of the town. This Analysis Sheet, when filled out, would be the answer to Question 1 above, *What Have We Got?* It is a searching inquiry into a town and one that any civic organization or any business executive, whether engaged in a formal “Better Home Town” program or not, might well make about his own town. It examines into the adequacy of public utilities, services, and facilities of all kinds; the appearance and condition of all types of public buildings and structures; the availability of hotels, eating places, service stations, rest rooms, and other facilities for visitors; the condition of homes and gardens; adequacy of housing; availability of industries, stores, shops, and services to supply local needs of every kind; the conditions, appearances, sanitation, and other features of

those that exist—and virtually every other question that can be asked to uncover the facts on the present condition of a town.

Next the manual provides for the setting up of objectives, based upon the needs disclosed in the Analysis Sheet. That answers Question 2, *What Do We Want?*

Then the manual presents plans of action: suggested organization charts for committees and subcommittees, suggested plans of action for each subcommittee, and the steps to be taken in carrying out each plan. For each major field of action there is a sample, a model, a plan, and a blank page for each community to fill in its own. This part of the manual answers Question 3, *How Do We Get It?*

How well the towns of Georgia have already done in "getting it" is indicated by these few examples.

First, the state has gotten a few new large industries like Chippee Mills near Gainesville and Brighton Mills near Rome; but the Company recognized from the outset that big industries were not the entire answer to the economic problem. Not every town could have them, and not every town would want them. Nor does industry, in the sense of large factories, ever supply all or most of the employment in any area. What Georgia needed were many small enterprises employing a few people each—and, above all, enterprises and activities that would make Georgia more attractive. Many of the best sources of employment would be in the construction of new community facilities, which in turn would attract new people, new markets, and hence further new employment in an upward spiral that would reverse the trend of the 1920's. And that is what has been happening.

One town that has been dependent largely upon farming also developed a prosperous beef-cattle industry. Wanting to balance agriculture with other employment, and at the same time provide a larger market for the large farm produce, the people of the town set about to induce the traveling public to stop in their town. They financed and built a good hotel, established a good place to eat,

and offered other friendly, co-operative services. Now they not only get the normal drop-in traffic on the highway but have drawn travelers who go out of their way to stop there. So all in all they have provided (1) employment in constructing the new facilities; (2) employment in operating these, as well as the trades that serve them; and (3) an increased market for the food stuffs grown locally and eaten by the tourists.

A neighboring farm community, feeling the need of bolstering its income, recruited local finances and erected a factory building. The local people spent \$18,000 for the land and building to house a "cutting-up" plant which employs 140 persons and has an annual payroll of approximately \$260,000. If the workers in that factory spend only half their income in the community, that's an extra \$130,000 per year of business for merchants all over the town.

Not all of the expansions have been in such large units. There is the inventive small-town carpenter who saw scrap lumber lying around a nearby mill. He set up a small shop to make mop handles from that scrap lumber. Now he turns out 100,000 of them every month.

In another case an ingenious wife turned her hobby into a paying proposition. She made dolls of chenille scraps and stuffed them with cotton waste from a nearby mill. The orders came in so fast that her husband resigned a good job to become her partner. Now they employ many others and will soon expand to the making of chenille bedspreads.

In the first year and a half of the program's full operation over 200 new manufacturing plants were completed or started, representing an investment of more than \$60,000,000 and employing nearly 20,000 people.

Nor are all of the opportunities in factories of any size. Many towns need an upholsterer, a plumber, a carpenter and cabinet-maker, an awning maker, a blacksmith. As a result of this program these and many other kinds of craftsmen have been induced to set

up shop in one or another Georgia town, and have found plenty to do to make a comfortable income.

Such simple devices as the making of wooden benches, painting them a cool green, and putting them along the sidewalks for the farmers to rest on while they are in town; establishing a farmers' market where they can display and sell their produce; providing clean washroom facilities, including a rest room for the farmers' wives and their babies—these have encouraged farmers to trade in their neighboring town instead of the more distant cities.

The steps taken to attract tourists would fill many pages: restoration of historical points of interest, the improving of access roads, the erection of suitable roadmarkers and signs, providing of parking areas, hotels, good food, sanitary rest rooms, guides to lecture on history and significance of exhibits, planting of shade trees—and, above all, friendly and courteous treatment of visitors.

Many communities in other states have done many of the same things, through their chambers of commerce, that have been done throughout Georgia. But there is no record of any other single company being responsible for as extensive a program of community betterment as this one.

#### ASSIGNING TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO COMMUNITY- IMPROVEMENT STUDIES

Some companies with large technical staffs of their own, and others that have retained outside consultants, have made outstanding contributions to community betterment by assigning those technical experts to make studies and recommendations on improved planning of streets, parks, playgrounds, schools, housing, and other community facilities.

One skillful blending of several public-relations techniques, all focused on the grass-roots community level, is the neighborhood, community, and home-planning program of Revere Copper and Brass, Incorporated. That has been a nationwide program, generated from the central executive offices in New York, but it has



been aimed at co-operation with local planning and government agencies.

Noted architects and engineers, designers, and planners were invited to submit plans and recommendations that would make for better living.

Specific ideas on everything from designing "living kitchens" to the rebuilding of entire cities were put into separate booklets for use by local authorities and by nonofficial citizen groups and individuals everywhere. One of these in particular, *You and Your Neighborhood—a Primer*, should be in every public-relations worker's library.

The following out of these plans would call for the use of building materials; probably large quantities of copper and brass would be used, and maybe some of it would be furnished by Revere. But there was nothing, in most of the booklets, that necessarily required the use of any copper, let alone using Revere products. Any direct sales benefit to Revere would come only as a by-product of having contributed to better homes, better living, and better communities. The company's name, however, will be favorably associated in the minds of city officials, planners, engineers, civic leaders, and others concerned with community problems.

General Electric Company has done something similar with its engineering studies of local sewage disposal, highway construction, traffic control, and other community problems. The basic studies have been made by head-office staff; but field engineers are made available for local demonstration, explanation, and consultation. In addition to printed manuals and materials the Company has prepared motion pictures visualizing the problem and suggested solutions.

The National Cash Register Company was mentioned earlier as being helpful to its community of Dayton through the use of the company auditorium and other facilities. But the Company's activity for the community doesn't stop at the company property line. The Company has shown in a multitude of ways that it is

interested in the betterment of the entire community, including its beautification.

In addition to maintaining its own plant properties in attractive condition, company officers have taken the lead in city-wide and area movements to modernize and develop Dayton and its surrounding area. The assistance of technicians as well as top company executives was lent to the work of the Dayton District Development Committee, which directed the improvement program.

#### CELEBRATING COMPANY ANNIVERSARIES BY CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

A unique example of community relations combined with sound employee relations is the Founder's Day celebration of American Rolling Mill Company.<sup>3</sup> On the birthday anniversary of George M. Verity, its founder, each of the company's employees, at the home plant and throughout this and other countries, celebrates the day by doing a good deed for another. The work is done individually or by groups, and they may do it to help an individual, an institution, the entire community, or any other worthy cause.

It is not a company charity program; the employees devise and finance their own projects. The projects have ranged from letters and visits to shut-ins to the gathering of toys, food and clothing for the needy, and to more permanent monuments to the founder. Memorial tree-planting programs have been carried out, hospitals and other institutions have been given needed equipment, and other permanent additions to the community have been made.

In several cities the entire community has begun to join in the movement. Newspapers and radio stations feature the event and describe the outstanding deeds done; merchants, in their advertising, urge not only the company's employees but all other citizens to take part. In all of the celebrations American Rolling Mills Company becomes the symbol of community co-operation.

<sup>3</sup> *Public Relations News*, July 29, 1946.

## SPONSORING PRESERVATION OF COMMUNITY LANDMARKS

Just as the destruction of a community historical or scenic landmark will arouse bitter resentment and antagonism in the community, so an effort to preserve or restore a neglected landmark will win appreciation and good will.

When the Donnacona Pulp and Paper Company established its headquarters near Quebec, it purchased in Quebec a noted and historical home, the Kent House. It then restored the house on the outside according to the historical documents of the city of Quebec, and in reconditioning the inside did so in keeping with the architecture of the period.

Houses and other structures thus restored become assets to a community, whereas in many cases they have been allowed to become run down and potential or actual eyesores. As community assets and attractions they have equal advertising value to the company, and any company that acquires such a landmark as part of its property would be shortsighted to destroy it, or to fail to capitalize upon it.

## *Helping in Community Promotion*

CAMPAIGNS to promote the community as an industrial location, as a tourist mecca, as a residential or shopping center, or otherwise are expressions of community desires and community ambitions which, to be successful, must have widespread backing within the community. Business executives have special aptitude and resources to be helpful in such projects, and they have many opportunities to put those resources to work.

### RESEARCH

Not every ambition to promote a community is well conceived. Many of them are either foredoomed to failure or, if successful, will be of doubtful value to the community. Executives and their staffs, trained in market research, product research, management engineering, and other techniques, can help at the very outset by analyzing a proposed project, pointing out its weaknesses and pitfalls, and suggesting ways of strengthening it.

### INGREDIENTS OF PROMOTION—MANPOWER AND MONEY

Community promotion, like all other community efforts, requires the two essential ingredients of manpower and money. Fund raising for community promotion furnishes one of the severest tests of a company's interest in the community as against a narrow self-interest. When a chamber of commerce or other local group sets out to raise a fund to promote the city, many com-

panies can—and many do—say that they have no interest in bringing new people or new business to the city. Characteristically, the companies which give that reply are the ones that do not enjoy good relations in the community; the companies that make themselves good citizens can be found on the list of subscribers to every such constructive move for the community. Any chamber of commerce executive in any large city will testify to that and will supply his own list of such good citizens: the spice manufacturer who won't sell any more spices if there is a new industry in town, the hat manufacturer who won't sell any more hats, the heavy-machinery manufacturer who won't sell any more machinery—because they all are manufacturing for a national market and sell little or none at all of their product in the nearby market—and yet who contribute generously to all worth-while movements to build the communities where they operate.

#### SERVICE ON LOCAL COMMITTEES

On the manpower side these same companies are often in a position to make the greatest contribution. Because they operate nationally their executives often have had a broader background in marketing and plant location, and may be able to bring that specialized knowledge to bear upon the community's problems of national promotion. In dealing with prospective new business establishments, they can speak with authority on the advantages of the community. In all the work that local communities have to do in community promotion, company executives can give valuable help: in initial planning and surveys, budgeting, preparation of advertising and promotional literature, negotiation with prospects, dealing with other local groups and agencies on problems affecting the program, and all other phases of executing such a program.

#### ENTERTAINING VISITORS

Whether or not companies are represented on the local committees responsible for community promotion, they can be helpful in the entertainment of visitors, both by specially planned visits to

company plants and by other personal entertainment. Executives who have made a success of their own operations in a community can do the most effective selling of others on the advantages of the community.

In discussing the techniques of plant tours and visits it was emphasized that each tour should be specially planned and tailored to the interests of those visiting the plant; that should not be forgotten in planning visits by those whom the community is trying to impress.

#### FEATURING THE COMMUNITY IN NATIONAL ADVERTISING

To feature the community or the region of the company's national advertising has several effects, all good. It not only demonstrates clearly all the recognition that we have been discussing, but it so identifies the company with the community that the company speaks for the community. And in the case of companies that profit directly from growth in the community, there is, of course, a direct business-promotion benefit that can come from such advertising.

Some of the gas and electric-utility companies have been among the leaders in this field of advertising. While their self-interest is evident, it is a form of self-interest that also coincides with the community interest and wins local commendation accordingly.

The group of power companies in the Northwest, serving Washington and parts of adjoining states, were among the first to launch such a program after the war. The companies serving the territory around Chicago, the Georgia Light and Power Company, the Ohio Power Company in Canton, the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in northern California, and the Carolina Power and Light Company were some of the others whose national advertisements have featured their home communities as places in which to live, to work, and to locate industry.

Railroads and banks, like power companies, have both a self-

interest and a community interest in advertising their regions. Some of them, like the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe, however, have run series of institutional ads that did not specifically advertise their areas with a direct view to freight or passenger traffic, but rather as a general-interest salute to the communities and their importance. The Bank of America has run both business-promotion and institutional ads that featured California and its communities.

When airlines and bus lines feature a community and its attractions, they are usually aiming for tourist travel. When the ads are complimentary to the community, however, the effect upon the home-town people is just as good as if there were no self-interest involved.

What makes the greatest impression as a community-relations gesture is for a company that is not so directly dependent upon community growth or travel to recognize the community in its national advertising. Talon, Incorporated, at Meadville, Pennsylvania, has done this in its full-page ads about Meadville.

#### BOOKLETS

The opportunities for featuring a community nationally or anywhere outside its boundaries are not limited to magazine or newspaper space. Special booklets and printed literature on the community, or sponsored radio programs saluting the community, have the same effect.

One of the best examples of a company that has won community good will by preparing a printed piece featuring the community is the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. While the Company has its executive offices in San Francisco, its business is spread nationally so that it has little reason to boost San Francisco over any other community. So it was solely as a matter of community relations that the Company, at the time of the initial United Nations Conference in San Francisco, issued a beautifully printed booklet called *Storied San Francisco* that was given to all the delegates,

staff, press representatives, and other visitors to the Conference as a souvenir. It carried the story of San Francisco's history, color, and glamour all over the world in a way that could be expected to produce little if any business for Fireman's Fund; but it produced a vast store of good will and appreciation among San Franciscans, who took pride in the brochure as the work of one of its hometown institutions.

That feeling of pride is the key to the value of these projects as community relations. Local people seeing or hearing such a tribute paid to their city have a possessive feeling of pride in "the home team," as they do when their local ball club wins the pennant or their high-school football team wins the state championship. In identifying themselves with the vaunted community, the home towners also identify themselves with the company that does the vaunting.

Incidentally, one railroad company proved the truth of this principle in a reverse-English manner. Apparently aiming to discourage travelers from using airplanes, the railroad issued a booklet called *Rain, Fog and Snow Chart for Ready Reference in Planning Business Trips*. With a headline of "Uncertain Weather—one out of Three Days," it painted such a violent picture of eternal storm over the entire area served by the railroad that many travelers would have hesitated to visit the area by plane or train. The wailing of chamber of commerce leaders throughout the area was louder than the thunder or the foghorns depicted in the booklet.

Both as sales promotion and as community relations, the idea backfired, and properly so. It had violated the canons of both fields.

#### FEATURING THE LOCALITY IN DECORATIONS

When a company has a large, conspicuous wall space in its office, lobby, or elsewhere that will lend itself readily to decoration with murals or photomurals, it has an opportunity to combine decoration with good community relations by featuring the scenic attractions of the community or the neighboring region. That is evi-



dence, to those who see it, that the company considers itself a part of the community and is proud of its assets.

### DISPLAYS OF OTHER FIRMS' PRODUCTS

Another gesture of recognition that may have business-promotion values but is just as good without them is to invite other local firms to display their products in company windows, lobby space, or other available display space.

In such a program it is important to avoid any appearance of favoritism. Equal opportunity should be offered to all companies in town to display their wares in turn for an equal period. The same principle should apply to artists, craftsmen, or others who may be featured.

### COMPANY ADVERTISING

Company ads featuring the community are doubly effective when tied in to a community program; and they are one of the most visible and tangible forms of co-operation in such a program.

It should not be necessary to remind such potential advertisers that they should consult with the local promotion organization—chamber of commerce, industrial development commission, or whatever agency is directing the program—before placing the ads. But it is surprising how many companies have failed to do it, and have thus reduced the value of their efforts.

Not only can a company save itself a vast amount of duplication of research in the preparation of its campaign, but by consulting with those heading the community program it can make sure that its expenditures will do the greatest good in the right places at the right time. It may be that the local group is aiming a campaign at a particular industry, or at industries in a particular area; it may plan a series of messages or approaches timed and designed to build up a certain total picture of the community in the minds of the prospects. In painting this picture the company's ads could play a vital role. If the company fails to consult, but rushes ahead

independently, its ads may be strong and constructive yet completely miss the boat as far as the local campaign is concerned. Either by wrong timing, by wrong emphasis, or by wrong selection of media the company may fail to accomplish what it might have accomplished.

It would also fail, in that case, to take full advantage of another possibility of double or triple values—the value of personal contact with community leaders, and the value of showing respect for the ideas of those leaders.

#### EXHIBIT MATERIALS

Companies doing manufacturing or selling are often ideally equipped to assist in preparing special exhibit materials, either portable or stationary, that the local promotion agencies may use in their selling efforts. Both art and engineering departments can help in preparing scale models, cutouts, picture blowups, and other useful aids to visual displays.

## 18.

### *Helping Agriculture and Other Business in the Community and Locality*

IN MANY communities of America agriculture is the foundation of the community's economy, and farm families in the surrounding rural areas are potent factors in the community life and thinking. In such communities service to agriculture is as good community relations as service to any other segment of the community.

The possibilities of such service and assistance are as boundless as the problems of agriculture itself, for there is scarcely a farm problem on which there is not some possibility that business firms could be helpful. So the examples given here are only suggestive, and by no means exhaustive.

#### SPONSORING IMPROVED LIVESTOCK BREEDS

The district manager of Sears, Roebuck & Co. in Salt Lake City, after becoming active in the Chamber of Commerce and its Livestock Committee, requested the approval and co-operation of his home office in the development of a livestock program in the State of Utah. The company gave him its backing.

He then bought a grand-champion bull at the stock show in Denver which he in turn placed at the disposal of the Utah State Agricultural College with the understanding that the bull would

be used by the college for the building of better herds in Utah. Today scores of descendants of this bull are found throughout the entire State of Utah; and in every instance recognition has been given that it is the descendant of Advanced Domino III, provided through the co-operation of Sears, Roebuck & Co.

In addition the Company participated in all the Junior Fat Stock Shows throughout the state in purchasing the livestock exhibited by the Junior Show members and in many cases paying large premiums for the stock.

Many other companies in all parts of the country have come to participate in these Junior Fat Stock Shows as one of the best means of encouraging the advancement of the livestock industry and of encouraging farm youth.

The good will created by these and other community relations efforts of Sears, Roebuck & Co. had a measurable value. When the chain stores in Utah were threatened with a destructive chain-store tax, it was soundly defeated; and Utah observers gave the good community relations of this company a large share of the credit for its defeat.

The Junior Fat Stock Shows, along with similar projects of 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America, and rural-youth groups generally, have become favorite points of contact for good relations with the rural community. Mentioned earlier were some of the kinds of assistance that can be given to these groups. Banks and other local businesses in many parts of the country sponsor these shows, put up the money to finance them, buy the cattle shown by the youth, and otherwise give backing and encouragement.

#### SURPLUS CROP DISPOSAL PROGRAMS

When a local farming area suddenly finds itself with a larger crop of some product than its normal market will absorb, the depressing effects are likely to be felt all over the community. They may back up into other communities that sell supplies to the farming area.

Business firms in San Francisco have practiced good community relations by several successful campaigns to dispose of such crop surpluses for nearby farming areas. Once it was the apple growers of Watsonville who had too many apples; another time it was Stockton that had too many potatoes. In both cases San Francisco depended heavily upon the prosperity of areas like Watsonville and Stockton for its own well-being.

Campaigns were launched by the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco and the metropolitan area to sell those surpluses. Grocery stores and food markets agreed to "push" Watsonville apples—feature them in newspaper displays, in window displays, and throughout the store; each store ad would have a banner headline "Buy Watsonville Apples—Special This Week." Hotels and restaurants featured Watsonville Apple Pie and other desserts; newspapers and radio stations, in their women's pages and recipe programs, played up recipes using apples. Housewives were urged to use apples from Watsonville wherever they could be used.

The chain stores took the lead in co-operating with the Chamber to push the campaign throughout their chain systems. The associations of independent grocers were equally co-operative, as were other agencies whose help was needed. In less than a week the surplus crop was cleaned up; the price stability and the morale of the apple industry in Watsonville was restored; and confidence renewed in the entire community, which had been depressed by the prospect of an unsold crop. San Francisco was well repaid for its community-relations efforts because its customers in Watsonville had more money to buy things—and, above all, had a friendlier attitude toward San Francisco and more desire to buy there rather than from another competing center.

The business firms that joined in the program likewise were well repaid. In San Francisco they won good will for their co-operation in a San Francisco community program; those that also served the Watsonville area, such as the chain stores, won friends there as well as throughout the metropolitan district.

This whole pattern was repeated with Stockton potatoes, and with identical results. The pattern is established now and ready for use in emergencies with other crops.

If the soundness of the economics of such a program is questioned—if anyone should ask, “What happens to the other crops that people don’t buy while they’re buying these surpluses?”—the answer is twofold: first, there is a certain amount of induced buying, buying of extra amounts that wouldn’t have been bought at all without the pressure of the campaign; and second, these are localized situations; any crops with which these would compete are either marketed over a wide national market or mature at different seasons, or both. So a cleanup of these crops locally will at worst only push back an equal amount, to be spread over the entire national market; but more likely it will clean up the market and clear the way for another crop coming on later.

#### RESEARCH IN UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL WASTES AND PRODUCTS

Industries often have research facilities—both in laboratory equipment and technical staff—that can be assigned to study of new uses for agricultural products, by-products, and waste materials.

The Du Pont Company, for example, maintains an Extension Division which has among its major duties consultation with and assistance to farmers on technical problems. This division keeps agricultural groups informed on what the company is doing to assist agriculture, for instance, in the field of chemurgy—the application of the science of chemistry to agricultural products to convert them to new forms and uses.

Sometimes this type of activity, starting small, will grow to assume the proportions of a major activity within a company. The Shell Chemical Company has invested half a million dollars in the agricultural laboratory it built in Modesto, California, and employs a staff of thirty specialists on a threefold program: it is a research institution for developing new ideas, a proving ground for

natural and synthetic products derived from petroleum, and a clearinghouse of scientific knowledge and information where farmers' problems may be presented and solved. In conjunction with the laboratory the company maintains an experimental farm of several hundred acres, growing a wide range of crops needed in the research program.

#### RESEARCH ON COMBATING CROP DAMAGE

Stimulated by the agricultural program of the Detroit Board of Commerce, several industries in Detroit have gone into programs of research to find ways of solving farm problems. Some of the research has been aimed at protection against damage of various kinds, while some has pointed toward increased production.

None of it, however, has involved any sales promotion by the industries doing the research. The fields in which they are doing research are far removed from their usual fields of production and sales, and they could have little hope of profit for themselves from anything their research might disclose. They have participated solely as a matter of community service.

The Budd Wheel Company has carried on one of these research studies to discover or adapt machinery or methods for cheap, efficient combating of frost damage to fruits and vegetables.

The loss of half the cherry crop by frost one year was estimated as a \$20,000,000 loss plus nearly the entire apple crop, which was worth several million more. The farmers were not the only losers: Detroit lost the purchasing power of those farmers for its industrial products; the people of the city lost the fruit needed for its diet; and they paid a higher price for the fruit that remained.

#### RESEARCH IN FIRE AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION ON FARMS

Similar co-operation with the Detroit program was given by the Detroit Edison Company in a study to determine better methods and equipment for fire prevention and protection on farms.

General Mills, Inc., as part of its series of services to farmers, has

given valuable help on fire and accident prevention. Its 24-page booklet, *Safety Guide for the Farm and Home Front*, is a rule book on how to avoid casualties of all kinds on the farm. It is a check list of the most likely causes of fire, injury, accidental death, and property damage around the farm, with constructive advice on how to handle each of them.

#### STUDIES TO INCREASE CROP YIELDS

While commercial-fertilizer companies, of course, conduct research in how to increase crop yields, research by automobile manufacturers with no fertilizers to sell is something else. As a part of the Detroit program, C. F. Kettering of the General Motors research organization sponsored a study that was unique in still another way. Besides being unusual research for an automobile manufacturer, it aimed at putting farmers to growing an unusual crop: hardwood trees.

Since Michigan has been a hardwood timber state, trees are an important part of the state's economy. Many farmers now devote part of their land to growing hardwood trees, but the supply is dwindling. And to treat the hardwood tree as a crop—which it is—is too slow a process for the individual farmer, who can't wait 75 years for his harvest.

So Kettering has sponsored studies to find commercially profitable means of increasing the rate of growth of the trees. Can the tree be brought to full growth without loss of quality within ten years, instead of 75? If it can be done the farmer will get seven and a half times the return from his land, and industry will get seven and a half times the amount of badly needed raw material, at a lower unit cost.

#### HELPING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO SET UP AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

A community-relations program that combines several of the usual motives, and several of the best possible results, is the agri-



cultural program fostered by the Harry Ferguson Company of Detroit. The company is in the business of selling tractors and farm implements. If its name is widely and favorably identified by farmers, they will be more likely to buy Ferguson implements. Likewise, if more farmers are more prosperous, and if more farming areas are made more productive, there will not only be more potential cash customers for Ferguson products but the communities involved will profit and prosper in proportion. The company might have concentrated on advertising and selling its own products, and made its name known only through competitive selling efforts. Instead it has engaged in many efforts to improve the condition of farms and farmers, and to "build an economically sound agriculture on a firm foundation."

In doing this it has worked largely through community-organization channels, thus multiplying the number of individual contacts with the company.

A principal point of contact has been the Kiwanis Clubs. An agricultural program was developed by the Company for Kiwanis International, outlining how local clubs could function in solving the three major problems of soil erosion, building an economically sound agriculture on a firm foundation, and building new and better markets for local farm products. A 76-page manual for use in every Kiwanis Club, and in turn by every co-operating group stimulated by Kiwanis, was prepared and furnished to the clubs by the company.

#### OTHER AIDS TO AGRICULTURE

Other companies in Detroit are making studies of such community problems as garbage disposal, with a view to salvaging the organic matter for use as fertilizer; diet and nutrition, as a field of city-and-farm mutual interest; industrial use of farm products and farm wastes as raw materials; improved surfacing of farm-to-market highways; industrial contribution toward efficient farm mechanization; and agricultural use of power.

The Detroit program is not unique in respect to city-and-farm relations; many cities have made great strides in that direction. San Francisco is notable, for a nonagricultural city; Des Moines, obviously an agricultural center, nonetheless has done an outstanding job in getting industrial and commercial interests, through its chamber of commerce, strongly behind agriculture. But Detroit is unique in the contribution made by so many individual firms.

There are, however, individual firms in many other cities scattered throughout the country that have made similar contributions. The improved public relations of many banks, for example, has involved extending many services to agriculture that have nothing directly to do with farm loans.

Examples can be found among both the smallest and the largest of the banks. The First National Bank of Meadville, Pennsylvania, publishes a monthly magazine, the *Crawford Farmer*, solely to disseminate news of interest to nearby farmers; it has developed plans for a county-wide system of marketing produce to assist the farmers in selling their products; and the bank even makes available paint sprayers, at a nominal rental, so that the farmers may paint their barns in a single day.

The Bank of America has built much of its present-day standing on its help to farmers. Its top officers, versed in agricultural matters, have been loaned repeatedly to farm groups to help them solve their problems of marketing and production. And the founder of the Bank, A. P. Giannini, endowed the Giannini Foundation at the University of California in order that the best academic brains might be made available for the solution of farm problems, economic and otherwise.

The Meadville bank, incidentally, has not limited itself to agriculture in rendering specific services. Local industries have been grateful to the bank for the loan of the bank's budget officer to help straighten out income-tax problems or set up budgets for their companies. In communities where professional accounting firms are available, it might not be good community relations to compete

with them; but it is an example of a service that can be offered to a community that needs it.

### DEVELOPING SUSTAINED-YIELD PROGRAMS

The protection of the natural resources upon which communities are built and depend is a matter of economic life and death to those communities. Typical of these natural resources are the forests, with their far-reaching effects upon human life.

Trees in the forests have an economic importance that reaches far beyond their great importance in cities. In the Pacific Northwest, as in any lumber country, entire communities have been built around trees. But it is a paradoxical growth, for the sawmill towns have been gradually destroying their future. The more they flourished by cutting timber, the nearer they came to the end of their career. And while some towns were built around the cutting down of trees, other towns—and vast industries involving all of the towns—were built around the use of the living trees. Farming, irrigation and water supply, electric power, and many related industries depended upon protection of the watersheds and the control of runoffs. A vast tourist and resort business was built upon the beauty of the forests. Hunting, fishing, and all of the businesses that depend upon those sports depended in turn upon forest cover and live streams. The aesthetic qualities essential to spiritual well-being affected people in all the communities.

Failure to cut timber, obviously, would have jeopardized a vast succession of interests—mill owners, mill employees, mill-town merchants and suppliers primarily; lumber dealers and lumber users secondarily; and many others. But unwise exhaustion of the timber resource would ultimately jeopardize all these, and would meanwhile jeopardize those who depended upon living forests.

So here was a true problem in community relations for the lumber companies with all of the elements present: desire for immediate profit by some, conflict in desire for economic preservation by others, and conflicting recreational and aesthetic desires, with

elements of patriotic concern for the national interest and for the interest of posterity thrown in for good measure.

And, as often happens, the best community-relations answer to the problem was also the best self-interest answer. It was probably not the answer that any one of the concerns would have desired if it were considering only its own immediate advantage, but it takes all interests into account.

The answer was a multiple program of selective logging on a sustained-yield basis, growing of new trees in a system of "Tree Farms," transplanting of those seed trees and otherwise reforesting cutover lands, application of all known techniques of scientific forestry to prevention of disease and pests, and elimination of timber waste through more selective use of all cut trees and through utilization of every possible part of the tree in by-products and new products.

As one of the leaders in the movement, Crown Zellerbach Corporation, says: "There is nothing philanthropic about these Tree Farms. They are not a fad . . . they are good sound business and good citizenship. . . . Crown Zellerbach feels it is now at a point where it can assure its employees, its customers, its suppliers, its stockholders, the forces of government and the people of communities where it operates that a balance between cut and growth is attainable. We have not reached the stage of complete balance, but we are headed in that direction and will not be content until the goal is reached."

One of the pioneers in the sustained-yield method of logging was the Weyerhaeuser Company, which early converted its operations entirely to that basis.

The immediate and obvious result of the program, of course, is that these companies are assured a perpetual supply of their raw material, and that while other companies are faced with the threat of having to go out of business, or are clamoring for the right to cut trees in National Parks, these companies manage to support the Park programs and other conservation movements. They have

enjoyed consistently good relations with all elements in their communities—as good possibly as any two companies in America. They have had a minimum of labor difficulties and a minimum of conflict with any other segments of their communities. Probably because they have so consistently supported community movements, they have consistently had support from others when they needed it.

To convert this mixture of conflicting community interests into a constructive community-relations program required more than the physical act of changing logging methods or of reforesting cutover lands, although those were the essential first steps. The remaining steps involved some merchandising of the idea, informing the public of what was being done—and, above all, making the public a part of the program.

What Crown Zellerbach has done makes a good case history. The company has dramatized its program through many media. Motorists driving through miles of bleak, denuded countryside, covered only with stumps of former trees, suddenly come to a green area of young trees. Conspicuously placed in this area is an attractive roadside sign telling the traveler that this is one of the Tree Farms of Crown Zellerbach Corporation.

Boy Scouts, Boy Rangers, 4-H Clubs, and other youth groups have been drawn into the program, and during the war millions of young seedlings were planted on Tree Farms in Washington and Oregon by high-school boys of those states.

In addition the Company is encouraging small woodlot owners in the communities adjoining their mills to manage their woodlands on a sustained-yield basis. The Company purchases “trees by the wagonload” from these small owners, who have been adding trees as a new crop along with “the cow, the sow and the hen.” Besides being a source of added income, it is a source that levels out the slack places in other income and uses farm equipment when it is not otherwise busy. When the farm truck is not busy

hauling feed or farm produce, it can be loaded with pulpwood for the nearby paper mill.

Other low-income groups in the surrounding communities have been assisted by the Company in harvesting minor crops from which the Company does not attempt to collect money, but which furnish a substantial seasonal income for many marginal families. Growing inside the Company's forests are cascara trees, whose bark may be harvested and sold to medical manufacturers; digitalis, another medical ingredient; ferns, huckleberry, and other greens which are sold to florists for use as home decorations. Under Company supervision these crops are cut and sold by local families, many of whom have little other cash income.

But economic benefits are not the only harvest that the communities have reaped from this program. Recreational and aesthetic benefits also flow from it. Forest growth provides food and cover for deer, birds, and other wildlife; protection of the watershed means constant water supply for trout streams.

And the Company has contributed as much to this phase of community values by what it has refrained from doing as by what it has done. An example of its co-operation in preserving roadside beauty is the six-mile-long forest corridor of mature timber on the Oregon Coast Highway. This timber, with its luxuriant undergrowth of native shrubbery and flowers, has been withheld from cutting to preserve one of the outside scenic drives in Oregon. In another case it withheld an entire 2400-acre tract of timber on Larch Mountain from cutting because it formed an important part of the watershed of world-famous Multnomah, Oneonta, and other scenic waterfalls along the Columbia River Highway. After holding it for twenty years, the Corporation exchanged the tract with the United States Forest Service for an equal value of timber in an area of no special recreational value. Thus the scenic value of the Larch Mountain tract will be preserved forever.

This regard for scenic, historic, and aesthetic values has led the Corporation to preserve individual specimens in other areas. What

is said to be the world's largest Douglas fir tree has grown for 1000 years on land now owned by Crown Zellerbach. Plans are being made to preserve this and other species in a park area so that the public may study and enjoy them.

Nearly every company in America that owns or uses property will at some time in its career have a choice between destroying or preserving some landmark, natural specimen, or other feature of the landscape that is highly prized by local people—often by national groups. The choice to destroy should never be made lightly, nor rationalized on the ground that “progress” requires or justifies it. Before the decision is made, every possible alternative way of accomplishing the same results should be studied and weighed. Even after all other methods have appeared too costly, the cost should be weighed against the possible monetary value of the good will and advertising value that can come from properly capitalizing on the preservation of the prized object.

Companies planning any expansion or change in property use should include in their check lists of steps to be taken, as integrally as title search, zoning ordinances, or any other considerations, the factor of what irreparable damage may be done to local objects of historic, scenic, scientific, or sentimental value.

## 19.

### *Helping Local Government*

THE same type of trained technical and professional personnel and know-how that business firms lend so helpfully to the service of local charitable, civic, school, and other causes can be just as helpful to local governments.

Especially in smaller communities, but sometimes even in larger ones, problems arise on which there is no one readily available to advise the city. Sometimes it is necessary to import an expert at great expense; but often there are specialists in the industries and business firms of the community who could solve the problems just as readily.

Local business firms, in such a case, would be well advised to make their specialists available to help on such assignments. Here are a few ways in which this help may be given with profitable results in terms of community relations.

#### MODERNIZING FISCAL, ACCOUNTING, BILLING, AND OTHER PROCEDURES

In a growing city new fiscal and control problems appear, ranging all the way from finding adequate sources of revenues on down to the mechanical problems of preparing and mailing tax bills. Corporation executives well versed in finance, and others well versed in the application of modern business machines and techniques, have counseled their local governments in such matters as:



Better yield from bonds and warrants  
Better investment of funds  
New sources of revenue  
Methods of collecting revenue  
Accounting methods  
Mechanical recording of documents  
Billing methods  
Mailing procedures  
Addressing

and dozens of related problems.

### CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Manufacturers of building materials, road machinery, and other supplies would naturally be expected to offer their services to local governments as a matter of sales promotion. In spite of the obvious self-interest, their services are often valuable and are entirely proper if properly conducted. But these are not the only firms that can help on road, street, and highway problems. Many industries not connected with road building have technical staffs and facilities that can be loaned to local government with great value.

Plant engineers, structural engineers, chemists, and many other technical experts in industry have advised local governments on such matters as:

Location  
Design  
Strength of materials  
Wearing qualities of materials  
Application of materials  
Lighting  
Safety

### TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

In handling the flow of large masses of traffic, either in public transit or in private vehicles, nearly every community in America has at some time had an acute problem. Regardless of the number

of engineers employed in the city government, these problems are so complex that consultation often is helpful. Many industries have engineers, transportation, or traffic managers whose present duties or former training have involved such experience. Those experts can be useful in advising on equipment, routing, signal systems, dispatching, loading and unloading, and the multitude of other problems incident to transportation and traffic.

#### GARBAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

While the disposal of garbage and sewage is now a universal function in American communities, knowledge of how to handle either problem has not been exhausted, particularly as communities grow. Growth and congestion make stream pollution, water contamination, odors, unsightliness—even room for disposal—more of a problem. Public policy makes conservation of salvageable materials a new concern. And each community has its own combination of all these factors.

Mention has been made above of several studies by large industries, but many other industries would have something to contribute. Companies with experience in the disposal or the utilizing of their own industrial wastes would have much to offer to local officials.

#### CO-OPERATION IN STAGGERED-HOURS AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO RELIEVE CONGESTION

In many cities efforts to relieve traffic congestion at peak hours through a staggered-hours program have been moderately successful. While company managements have their own problems in winning the co-operation of their employees—not to mention the operating problems involved—at least no staggered-hours program can be successful without the full support of company managements.

If such a plan is well conceived and otherwise deserving of support, a company will win good will from local officials by co-operating fully.

## CO-OPERATION WITH LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Anything that raises health standards in a community will pay its own dividends back to every employer. But, just as a matter of good relations with local government, there is much that an employer can do to help in local health work.

A company producing foodstuffs may have expert staffs that can advise the local health officials on diet and nutrition as applied especially to that community's conditions. The problems of garbage and sewage disposal are part of this picture.

In this field, as in all the others above, company executives can help local governments by taking the lead in movements to support the local government. Often the problems of local officials are not technical but financial; and without the understanding and support of local citizens the needed funds are not provided. So the formation of a Health Council, Public-Health Association, or Health Committee, either independently or with the local community chest or chamber of commerce, can be a valuable aid to a local health department.

Similarly, most chambers of commerce have Streets and Highways committees; many have Education committees and other committees related to local government functions. Even though these committees often become critical of activities of the local government that they think are improper or poorly conducted, sound public relations on the part of the local officials will usually produce support for any worth-while project.

## SERVICE ON LOCAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

We have talked about service on local civic, charitable, and community organizations. That discussion had largely to do with the volunteer nongovernment agencies.

The same recommendation is made for service on local school boards, city councils, city commissions, and boards of all kinds. Many people will say that such a recommendation "gets the com-

pany into politics" and into "controversies." That is a possible risk, but not a likely one, if company officials and employees take on their service in good faith, to serve the community and not to serve the company or themselves selfishly. The company as such should not take part in the election of people to local office. If the company avoids such involvement, and if its personnel act in good faith, the company rarely will be criticized and often will be praised for public service.

Above all, business firms must remember that they cannot expect good government if the best-informed, best-qualified people in town are unwilling to serve when called upon.

As evidence that all this is not academic theorizing, we can look at the examples of some of the best-regarded corporations in America, some of those with the least labor trouble and the least local controversy of any kind. An outstanding example is the Studebaker Corporation, which has encouraged its officers and employees from top to bottom to accept any public responsibilities that they were asked to bear. Appointive and elective offices at all levels—local, state, and national—have been held or sought at one time or another by the personnel of that company.

## *Who Is Responsible?*

THE ideas suggested in this book will be of value only as they are put into operation. And they will be put into operation only as they are made the first order of business for someone with authority enough to get them done.

Many well-intentioned programs come to nothing because no one is responsible for carrying them out. That is particularly true in the field of community relations because of the element of "what is everybody's business is nobody's business."

Good community relations, like every other phase of good public relations, must of course be everybody's business; the desire and the determination to do a good job of it must run through the organization from top to bottom if it is to be completely successful. But it will run best if it is also made some one person's specific business to keep it alive as "everybody's business."

### STAFF RELATIONSHIP

The very fact that so many people and so many departments in an organization must play a part in a good community-relations program makes it especially important that the relationships be clearly defined: the place of the person who is made specifically responsible for community relations, his relationship to other departments, his relationship to top management, and, above all, the relationship of top management to the whole community-relations program.

Because the success or failure of the program will be determined ultimately by what top management does, let us look at that aspect first.

### TOP MANAGEMENT'S JOB

Unless the chief executive of the company recognizes and accepts community relations as one of his major objectives, and unless he sets it up administratively to command major attention, the program will never reach its full possibilities of success. It is partially a matter of attitude: like every other phase of public relations, the community-relations program will reflect the attitude of the man at the top. It is also partially a matter of action: the program will reflect the extent to which the man at the top implements his attitude.

Except in a small company, the man at the top will not be able to do the whole job himself, no matter how much he may want to. Just as he delegates the responsibility for production, sales, and finance, so must he delegate the responsibility for community relations. How he does this delegating is one of the critical steps in the entire program.

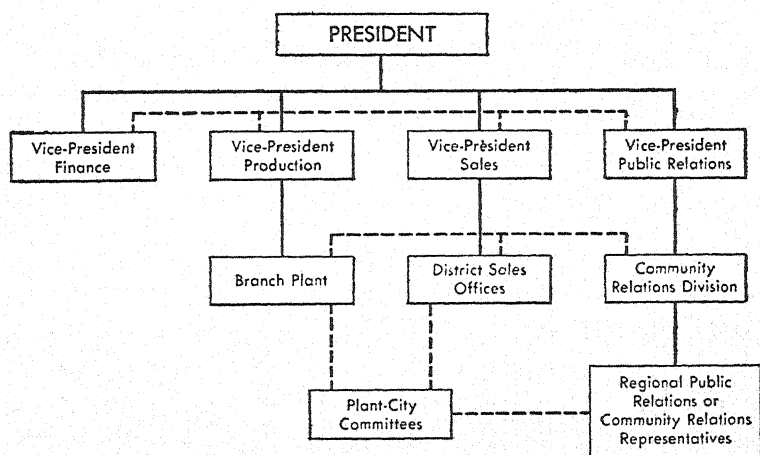
The planning and prosecution of the community-relations program must not only be made the responsibility of someone at top-policy-making level but must be made a major responsibility of that person. If it is delegated to a subordinate who has no part in shaping policies and who has no voice in advising management on major moves, then it is not likely to be a significant program. But likewise if it is delegated to a top-level executive, but as only one of many heavy responsibilities, it is in equal danger of being lost in the shuffle of other demands and pressures.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOP EXECUTIVE

As we define the relationship between the chief executive and the person responsible for community relations, the problem divides into two parts: the head office and the branch. There is one

set of relationships between the chief executive of the entire company and the chief public-relations officer for the entire company operating at headquarters, and another set of relationships between the top people in the branches and any public-relations or community-relations representatives in the field.

The exact organization structure differs from company to company, depending upon the nature, size, and complexity of the company, so that there is no single structure that can be called standard or that is necessarily correct. But there are enough common features among companies with outstanding community-relations programs so that a pattern is beginning to emerge. This pattern is indicated in the organization chart below.



For a company that is complex in its operations, this chart is obviously oversimplified. Such a corporation as General Motors, for example, would require an entire page of intricate chart to depict activities suggested here by a single box item. Yet most companies can use this simple chart as a guide and make their own elaborations to fit their particular circumstances.

As shown in the chart, the officer in charge of public relations is

at the same level as the heads of production, sales, finance, and other major functions, immediately under the chief executive. In a larger company, with several vice-presidents heading major divisions, there would be a vice-president in charge of public relations, reporting directly to the president. In a smaller company, where major functions are headed by department managers, there would be a department manager in charge of public relations. He likewise would report directly to the head of the company.

The responsibility for the community-relations program centers in the executive—whether vice-president or department manager—in charge of public relations; and it is a major responsibility of that executive. In larger companies it is set up as a major division of the public-relations department, with a staff devoting full time to community relations.

An increasing number of larger companies are extending this pattern to make someone in each plant city responsible for community relations in that city. Such firms as General Motors, General Electric, and General Shoe have set up community or plant-city relations directors in each city or area in which their companies operate.

#### RELATION TO OTHER EXECUTIVES

The direction of community relations is a staff, rather than a line, function. It must cut across all other functions and departments—departments which have their own accountability to the top executive. So the direction of community relations must rest upon recommendation and persuasion. In theory the person in charge of this activity would recommend only to the top executive, and the force of his recommendations would depend upon their adoption by the executive as instructions to other departments. In actual practice, once established, the relationship is one of persuasion and voluntary acceptance by the other departments, with the full backing of the top executive but without recourse to formal orders.



The vice-president in charge of public relations, together with such community-relations staff as he may have at central headquarters, works with the heads of other departments at headquarters in the planning and execution of the company-wide program. The local representative at the plant-city level is, in most companies, accountable to the vice-president for public relations at headquarters rather than to any operating executive at the local level. His relationship to the local executive is a functional staff relationship like that of the public relations vice-president to the other vice-presidents at headquarters.

These relationships can perhaps best be illustrated by concrete examples. The vice-president for public relations, in consultation with his headquarters staff in community relations, will conceive and develop a plan for plant tours and Open Houses at all the branch plants of the company. He will propose the plan to the vice-president for production and will ask his co-operation in having the plan carried out as a means of improving the company's community relations. The program as proposed will include a detailed outline of the steps to be taken: the kinds or groups of persons to be invited, the preparations to be made, etc. The public-relations vice-president will ask the production vice-president to send word to all branch-plant managers asking them to join in staging these tours and Open Houses.

Then if the company has local public-relations or community-relations representatives in each of these plant cities, they will be instructed by the public-relations vice-president to collaborate with the plant managers in the actual execution of the program. The local public-relations representative will take the *general* suggestions of persons to be invited and will develop that into a *specific* list of names and addresses of the appropriate local people. He will take the suggested schedule and program of the tour, translate it into a detailed itinerary and timetable fitting the exact circumstances of that particular plant and community, and develop a job list for each of the persons who are to participate. Once he and

the plant manager have agreed on the program, all instructions to the plant personnel will usually be issued in the name of the plant manager. Negotiations with other people in the community—with printers, caterers, and other suppliers or with newspapers or guest speakers—may be handled by the public-relations representative under a division of responsibilities agreed upon between him and the plant manager. By agreement, the plant manager may delegate to the public-relations representative any amount of his authority to direct the plant personnel in their detailed assignments in connection with the tour.

A similar pattern may be followed in the handling of company contributions to local causes in the plant community. On the basis of the experience of those companies that now observe some or all of these practices, the following is proposed as a guide: the public relations vice-president may propose to the vice-presidents for finance and for production that the company should allocate funds for contributions to local charities and causes in all its plant communities. He may propose a specific amount of money for the budget, or he may propose a general formula, and he may propose a series of steps to be taken in the handling of these funds locally. The local public-relations representative will then consult and advise the branch manager in the exact allocation of these funds to specific local organizations, the manner of presentation, the timing, and other details as discussed in Chapter X.

In companies that have not carried their organization structure to the point of having local representatives of the public-relations department, the branch-plant or sales manager will have the responsibility for local details himself. If the local unit is a large one, he will have someone on his staff responsible for assisting him in the execution of the program. But whether there is a local representative of the headquarters public-relations department, whether the branch-plant manager has a member of his own staff to assist him, or whether he has to handle the details himself, the companies with success in community relations have been those in which the

branch-plant or branch-sales manager himself, like the president of the company, has accepted community relations as one of his major responsibilities.

### COMMITTEES

In many companies the mechanics of these relationships with other executives are implemented through the operation of committees. At headquarters there is a Public Relations Policy Committee, with the vice-president for public relations usually serving as chairman. All the other top officers, including the president, serve on this committee because it decides or recommends to the board of directors on basic company-wide policy. In addition to the top level of general officers, this committee will usually include those responsible for regional, local, or field operations.

In the plant city there is a Plant City Committee whose members will include not only the operating executives of the plant but the chiefs of any sales offices or regional executive offices that may happen to be located in the same city. The local public-relations representative usually serves as secretary to that committee.

These Plant City committees, which meet often to discuss all phases of the company's relations with the local community, serve a two-way purpose. Not only do they consider and plan action on company policy and program as it may be suggested to them from headquarters, but they are a channel of communication that keeps the company informed on local attitudes—of customers, employees, and the general public.

### GOOD ORGANIZATION PAYS OFF

The surveys made by Opinion Research Corporation<sup>1</sup> indicate that while public relations apparatus (program and staff assignment) does not guarantee good community relations there is evidence that companies recognizing the community relations problem organizationally get along better than those that do not.

<sup>1</sup> The Public Opinion Index for Industry, *op. cit.*

Among the firms surveyed, of the top twelve in terms of good community relations, eight had a director of public relations or some assigned responsibility to a given officer or group. Of the lowest twelve, eight had no recognized program or specifically assigned responsibility.

#### DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

As pointed out in Chapter VIII, top management should establish certain basic policies which will point the direction toward the ultimate community-relations goals of the company. Then, if the company follows good administrative practice, a high degree of authority and discretion will be left to each successive level of administration to make decisions in execution of these policies.

One of the principal responsibilities of the public-relations or community-relations director at headquarters will be to review such decisions from time to time; to point out wherein they depart from the policy line; and to suggest where they could be improved. But he should not try to make all those decisions himself. If the company is to make itself a part of each community where it operates, the decisions affecting each community must as far as possible be made in that community.

The role of the public-relations executive in community relations is to be the analyst, adviser, planner, and organizer. Much of the actual "doing" will be done by others under his guidance. It will be his job to analyze everything the company is doing, in the light of its community-relations potential; to identify the damaging practices that should be eliminated and the constructive practices that should be continued and strengthened; and above all to seek out the new possibilities, the new points of contact with the community, the new opportunities for positive programs.

As an analyst he should be expected to carry on a continuous and two-way examination of the company and of the community. He should be examining the company in terms of the "don'ts" suggested in Chapter IX and in terms of the minimum obligations outlined in Chapter X; and he should be examining the commu-

nity in terms of such opportunities as suggested in Chapters XI to XIX.

As an adviser he should be expected to point out to management and to the other departments the community-relations consequences of any present practices, and to recommend any changes that seem to him desirable.

As a planner and organizer of new programs, his creative and administrative talents would most come into play. To think of an idea would be only the first step; the real test would be in the execution. The ideas would not necessarily be his own; but the responsibility for their execution would be his.

So it is the task of the public relations executive to take an idea, such as any of those suggested in Chapters XI to XIX, and translate it into a complete plan of action: visualize its purposes and ramifications; then break it up into its component parts; develop all the details of each part; see that every detail fits practically into the pattern of the company's operations; work out the allocation of jobs and responsibilities to each unit or individual; develop costs and budgets; and work out time schedules and other controls.

Then, having developed the proposed program as a planner, it is his responsibility as an organizer and administrator to see that the program is put into motion and followed through to execution. In most respects his "seeing" that things are done will mean, as we have said, using power of persuasion rather than of direct orders. It will mean winning the approval of management or the co-operation of department chiefs for the program as a whole, and winning the understanding and the enthusiasm of other executives and employees down through organization and out into the branches.

Even though approval at the top may result in instructions to branches and to others calling for collaboration in the program, it still will be the responsibility of the public-relations executive to suggest and guide all the steps of that collaboration. Instructional bulletins, pamphlets, and other literature may have to be prepared

and transmitted; meetings may have to be held, talks given, visual presentations made, and, in many other ways, ideas communicated to everyone involved in the program. While the public-relations executive should aim for a maximum of participation by line executives in each of those steps, it will be his own responsibility to plan, organize, and control the timing of each step.

Co-ordinating and integrating into a single program the many scattered efforts by departments and individuals not under his direct authority calls for a high degree of organization.

### AVOID "ERRAND BOY" SETUP

In those communities, whether plant-city or head office, where the company has a community-relations or public-relations director, there is a danger of his being misused if his place is not fully understood.

No one individual can "handle" this public-relations job. The job of representing the company in community activities should never be delegated to any one person hired for that purpose. A wise public-relations executive won't let himself be put in that position, and a wise top executive won't try to "slough off" his responsibility on the public-relations director or counsel.

A public-relations executive who assumes, for himself or his subordinates, all the assignments of serving on committees, making speeches, and attending meetings defeats both his own and the company's purpose. The public is quick to spot such spokesmen and to resent them. Notice the way a newspaper reporter treats a speech by a person hired to make speeches, as against a speech by a regular operating executive.

It is tempting, for a man or a woman who likes contact with the public and who enjoys the limelight, to accept every assignment that comes along to represent the company in a public activity. If he does it, he is signing himself up for a career of mediocrity. He will have no time to devote to his major job, and he will not be

taken seriously enough within his organization to be allowed to do his major job. If he is willing to do all the company's errands, he will come to be regarded by public and coworkers alike as an errand boy. He will not have the prestige required to do an effective job.

The job of the public-relations man is to counsel, guide, and direct others. His job is to decide what contacts with the public can be made most effectively by all employees of the company, and then to see that they make them and that they make them right. It is, first, to analyze every civic movement, every community organization, every governmental activity, and every civic problem that might have any possible relationship to the company, or on which any employee or department of the company might be able to lend a hand. It is, second, to analyze the entire personnel and physical resources of the company, to see who is best adapted to do various community jobs and with what company tools. It is, third, to follow through with management and the other departments to see that those jobs are done.

#### DIRECT LINE RESPONSIBILITIES

While the public-relations director is essentially a staff officer, it does not follow that he should have no line responsibilities or authority. There is a large area in which he would have complete responsibility and authority, and in which his decisions would be final. All matters related to publicity should be under his supervision; and, depending upon the size of the company, he might have a large staff under him handling special phases of that work—newspaper, magazine, radio, house organs, etc.

Likewise, the planning and management of exhibits, plant tours, and many other related activities might be his direct line responsibility—provided always that even in these things he does not fail to put other top-management people out in front whenever they should be there. In the matter of donations, for instance, while

the local community-relations representative might make the decisions as to amounts, it will be well to have the top executive participate in the actual delivery of the check whenever possible.

### INDEPENDENCE OF JUDGMENT

It has been said that "the first requisite for a good public-relations man is a willingness to be fired at any time." That is true in community relations as in any phase of public relations, and its truth should be understood both by those who aim to work as public-relations executives or counselors and by those who intend to hire such services.

It is not pleasing to an executive to be told that his company, which he considers well managed, is cordially disliked throughout his community. It is even less pleasing to be told that the public antagonism is resulting directly from policies and practices that he, himself, has initiated; that unless he changes them, he is going to suffer increasing ill will and pressure from the public. However much people may invite such criticism, it can be embarrassing when it is given, and is often resented.

The public-relations worker must face that resentment. If he "pulls his punches," if he compromises his position to avoid the displeasure of his employer, he has sacrificed his value to that employer.

But the relationship between public-relations worker and management need not be of such a character. The public-relations man should be able by patience, persuasiveness, or diplomacy to win management over to his viewpoint without focusing attention on differences. In fact, such abilities are the marks of a truly successful public-relations executive. But patience and diplomacy are techniques of *selling* the idea, after the idea is once formed. In arriving at his ideas in the first place, the public-relations worker must free himself of any fearfulness. He must be completely independent in his judgments. Any later qualifying or modifying of plans should



be based on practical judgments as to how fast the entire plan can be sold and assimilated, but not on fears of opposition or resentment.

### MANAGEMENT'S INVESTMENT

It is no small task for top management to build a strong community-relations program. To select the right personnel to direct the program; to generate the right attitude toward the program among other departments; to guide the integrating of the program into the other operations of the company; to give the same degree of supervision to this as to other major activities of the company—these in themselves call for a substantial investment of time and effort by the top executive. But even that investment is not the total price that the top executive must pay. The adjustment in his own thinking and the consequent reshaping of some of his own methods; his good offices in winning the support of the board of directors; and the time he must occasionally spend on personal participation in community-relations projects—these will add materially to his cost. And it is worth the price.

If he will start his program prepared to see it through—to back his initial investment with enough “working capital” of time and effort to give it a chance to work—it will pay as large dividends as any comparable investment he could make. They will be dividends paid in dollars, and they will be dividends paid in kind. For every hour spent in the furthering of community relations, there may be a dozen or a hundred hours saved that would otherwise be spent in wasteful conflict. Above all, they will be dividends of good will, satisfaction, and peace of mind.

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